SERMONS

PREACHED ON

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey, D.D. Edited and prepared for publication by the Rev. J. O. JOHNSTON, M.A., Principal of the Theological College, Cuddesdon; and the Rev. ROBERT J. WILSON, D.D., Warden of Keble College. Four Vols. 8vo. With Illustrations. Vols. I. and II., 36s. Vol. III., 18s. [Vol. IV. in the press.

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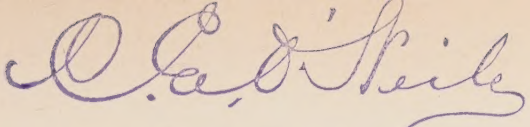

Sermons

PREACHED ON

Special Occasions

1860—1889

By H. P. LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D

LATE CANON AND CHANCELLOR OF ST. PAUL'S

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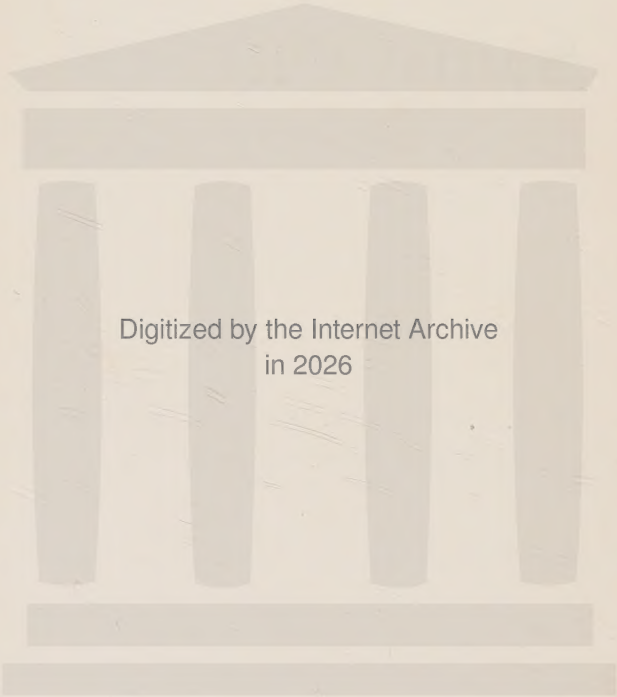
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The collection is intended to secure a place for some of these carefully prepared sermons in the uniform set of Dr. Liddon's printed works; while at the same time it has the interest of illustrating the style of his preaching at different periods during the thirty most active years of his life.

All Saints Day,
1896.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST'S WELCOME TO THE PENITENT.[1]

St. Luke xv. 20.

When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

OFTEN, dear brethren, in reading the life of a good or distinguished man, must we have indulged the wish that we could have witnessed him at the crisis of his career, or when engaged upon the work which has rendered him celebrated. Such a wish is so natural as to be no unfair proof of real interest in the records of the departed. Do we not gratify it as far as possible by visiting the scenes and buildings in which they lived, and by picturing to ourselves the circumstances which surrounded them and which no longer exist? Do we not endeavour to realise the great statesman at his place in the senate, and the great general on the field of victory, and the great Apostle as he speaks from the Areopagus, and the man of heart in his family circle or among his poorer neighbours, and the man of science among his peers or while pursuing his investigations? Each may have many sides to his character, but our interest centres in his leading excellence. Each man may, according to his measure, do with all his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do, but he will most successfully achieve that for which God has given him opportunities and inclination. If his foresight and

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Giles, Oxford, on the Second Wednesday in Lent, February 29, 1860, as one of a course of Oxford Lent Sermons.

skill and perseverance is to be brought to light, if the hidden resources of his nature are to be conspicuously manifest, he must be engaged upon his master-work, he must be aiming at the idea which is constantly present to his understanding, and compassing the purpose on which he has unreservedly embarked his affections and which continually shapes his will. Therefore is it that there are particular times, and scenes, and occupations, which we connect with the memory of kings, or statesmen, or philosophers, or philanthropists, or pure and noble and saintly men, who live in our memories and who have passed away. And I ask—it is a solemn question, but I will ask it—what is the one scene, or occupation, or work, which, beyond all others, as illustrating His character or His Redemption, we cherish and dwell upon in the recorded Life of our Lord and Saviour?

Unquestionably in That Life one only end was pursued without faltering or error—the Will of the Eternal Father: "I do always such things as please Him." Doubtless in That Life lesser duties were discharged with all the clear consciousness and nervous purpose of the greatest. Our Lord was equally resolved and collected, whether He closed the book in the synagogue at Nazareth or raised the dead from the rock of Bethany. Doubtless it is difficult and perilous for us who are below Revelation and not above it, to decide upon the relative importance of actions and of words, when, in one sense, an equal interest pervades the whole, since in That Life all, we are sure, is divine and charged with mystery. But we do know at least what seems to touch us most nearly, from its suitableness to our condition, or wants, or yearnings. We know when the Gospel-story makes us pause and hold our breath, and think, "This act of Jesus does not merely raise my wonder or my admiration, it takes my heart captive; it is meant for me." And accordingly I will

hazard an answer to my question. Nothing, I believe, from His Nativity to His Ascension, is dearer to the hearts of Christians, or more signally illustrative of the glory and mercy of our blessed Saviour, than the ready, tender, generous welcome He offered again and again, by deed and word, to penitent sinners, who sought and found Him.

Certainly the mystery of His Birth forces upon us more simply the sense of His humiliation; His temptation in the wilderness brings Him into more visible contact with the king of evil. His Soul poured forth in agony in the garden, His Body pierced upon the cross, melt our hearts more constrainingly at the sight of His enduring, His fathomless love; and He Himself said that in being lifted up from the earth He should draw all men unto Him. In the hour of His Resurrection-triumph we realise His victory over death and hell more forcibly. But in welcoming the penitent He seems to sum up and epitomise the mysteries of His Human Life. When is He more self-humbling than in thus lowering Himself to the wants of sinners? when more intimately conversant with evil than when thus by actual contact He encounters it in its victims? when more divine or more human in His love than amid the strong throes of that sympathy which He pours around the returning sinner? Did He not choose the cross for a tribunal from which He would award pardon to one penitent? Did He not, while angels waited on His Easter-footsteps, hasten in His strength and in His glory to bind up another mourning and broken heart, and to assure a third of His free and full forgiveness? How is He more truly conqueror of death and hell than in rescuing from the grip of Satan and of sin one of His brethren, to turn a heart's heaviness into joy, and to put off its sackcloth, and to gird it with gladness?[1]

[1] Ps. xxx. 12.

I.

Christ's welcome to the penitent, let us observe, is not the first act or step of the sinner's return to God. To contemplate it aright, we must remember that it is possible only in virtue of that astonishing love for man and that divine forbearance towards sinners on the part of our blessed Saviour of which earlier preachers in this course have spoken to you. It implies, moreover—that blessed welcome—a previous voice of the Eternal Spirit, and a submissive recognition of that voice on the part of the sinner who hears it. For sin leaves a twofold scar in the soul of the sinner: it darkens his understanding, and it paralyses his will. "My heart panteth," the awakening sinner cries in the first moments of anguish, and this because "my strength hath failed me,"—mark, brethren, the collapse of will,—"and the sight of mine eyes is gone from me,"[1] — observe the loss of spiritual intelligence. Now the very early movements of repentance imply a partial restoration both of strength and of sight to the darkened and enfeebled soul. The Everlasting Spirit fills the world, not merely to stablish, strengthen, and settle the faithful, not merely to build up and sanctify Christ's own through the sacraments, or ministry, or Scriptures of the Church, but to hover with quickening power and love, with gentle breathing and strong agonising solicitations, around souls which, like the prodigal, have wasted their substance, their natural advantages and their spiritual endowments, in riotous living, and have "begun to be in want."

A voice sounds from heaven:—the prodigal is of no one age, or sex, or station, or character.

We indeed are familiar with the prodigal as a young man of gentle breeding, and liberal education, and refined

[1] Ps. xxxviii. 10.

associations, who resolutely starts in life with the idea that the world is before him and that he has to enjoy himself. There is the quiet assumption of a knowledge higher than his father's, then the breaking the bonds of authority asunder and casting away its cords from him. The fever of sin succeeds; but excess is probably avoided from considerations of prudence, and grossness is veiled at least by good taste. The prodigal, it may be, reaches a stage of life at which passion has cooled, and the desire of advancement or of gain has taken up in the heart that throne which is no longer held by sensuality. The world speaks of him as a respectable man who it believes was once wild;—but before God he is a harder and more inveterate sinner than ever. He is become a Zacchæus; he is entirely engrossed by whatever will increase his means or his influence. As his will hardens into an attitude of defined resistance to the will of God, his life is coated over by a crystallisation of increasing credit for respectability. Can we wonder that he joins the cry of libertinism or of unbelief,—"with our tongue will we prevail; we are they that ought to speak; who is lord over us?"—whenever it is safe to do so, now that he has reached a point at which he can say in his heart, even of that which he knows to be the work of the Evil One, "Thou God carest not for it?" Truly it is a marvel when the Ephphatha of such a soul is pronounced in heaven, and the scales fall from his eyes as the Eternal Spirit breathes upon him; truly it is a marvel to note his keen, clear sense of his present misery, of his past guilt, of his heavenly Father's loving-kindness and bounty; to see the conviction of sin grow deeper, and stronger, and more constraining, until at length the maxims of the world, and the ridicule of companions, and the strength of habit, and the fever of prejudice, can no longer repress the outbreak of that wail of agony, which has sounded and been

hushed, and has sounded again in the depths of his soul, even in the days of his deepest degradation, and which now wells up with irresistible strength from the fountain of his agonised spirit to his Father's throne: "I am feeble and sore smitten, I have roared from the very disquietness of my heart. My days are gone like a shadow, and I am withered like grass. Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice."[1]

"I thought upon my ways,"—the first symptom of repentance, my brethren, and a partial reversal of the blindness of the impenitent soul. A second follows: "I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies,"—a second symptom, the recovery of force by the paralysed will; or, as the prodigal has it, "I *will* arise and go to my Father." He will not content himself with praising what he does not mean to imitate, with longing for what he knows is within his reach, with realising the blessedness of God's servants while he despairs of joining their company. That memory of the happy past, of the spiritual plenty of his deserted home, of the fresh joyousness of the days which he spent beneath his father's roof; that keen, strong perception of the nothingness of what the world can offer him, which sets on one side its education and its good taste, and its refinement, and its wealth, and its activity, and its grace of manner, and its affectation of principle, and its hold upon the multitude, and the homage it receives from the press, and the votaries it numbers among the great and the powerful, and penetrates straight down to the void which opens like a chasm beneath, to that loss of all real peace, real faith, real hope, real love,—to that inner existence, which is only superficially so active because it is at bottom so aimless—to that felt, that miserable, that present banishment from the Face of God, coupled with the torturing

[1] Ps. xxxviii. 8; cii. 11; cxxx. 1.

memory of His gracious Smile in bygone days, and with the knowledge that thousands are at this moment basking beneath Its warmth and brightness,—all this has not been given him for nothing. Though he be wandering in the streets of Jerusalem with Peter, or mixing with the world's gaiety like the Magdalen, or in the last agony with the thief on the cross, he *will* arise and go to his Father. He will make an effort, and at the moment; he will seek the home of his early affections; rebel that he is, he will throw himself upon One Whose nature and property it is to have mercy and to forgive; he will turn a deaf ear to the scorn of his companions, to the polished ridicule of the world, to the false prudence of the half-hearted, to the faithless murmurings of his own aching heart; he will not tamper with light which has been vouchsafed that he may obey it, and which may be dimmed or withdrawn if obedience is delayed; he will go to a Father Who is a Father still, even to *him*, and ease his heart, even if he may not do more, by a full outpouring of its wounds and miseries, by an unreserved and broken-hearted confession: "While I held my tongue, my bones consumed away through my daily complaining. I will acknowledge my sins unto Thee, and mine unrighteousness have I not hid."[1]

II.

Brethren, are there among you those who have journeyed thus far with the returning prodigal? if so be, you know that here his real difficulties begin. He is going to his Father. It has been remarked that there is no trace in this parable of a Mediator Who is sought, and Who leads the sinner to the Father's presence-chamber. It has been urged in reply that the agency of a Mediator, if not expressed, is implied and understood,

[1] Ps. xxxii. 3, 5.

both from the evangelic tenderness of the reception, and from the explicit assertions of Scripture elsewhere. And certainly, as when the Apostle speaks of our being justified *freely* through the Father's grace, we might have supposed that the Father pardoned without Sacrifice or Atonement, if it were not added "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His Blood;"[1] so here the prodigal is received only in virtue of Infinite Merits and Sacred Sorrows, to describe which does not fall within the scope of the parable, though such description is given elsewhere. It is God the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Who receives the penitent; it is "the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and Man," which secures the reception. Nay, more, it is our Saviour, Who, besides announcing to our race the welcome which awaits sinners at the Hands of God, administers that welcome in His own Human Nature, since "God was in Christ reconciling;"[2] administers it whether in the days of His flesh, or through the ordinances and ministers of His Church; administers it with a love which is as Divine as it is human, and as human as it is Divine.

But there are aspects of our blessed Lord revealed in the New Testament which may inspire the penitent with some anxiety. I do not speak of the Glory which He had with the Father before the world was, or before His Incarnation, as when Isaiah saw It, and cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts."[3] But even in His earthly life, are there not flashes of that Majesty which, we know, was hidden all along beneath His bruised and broken Form?

[1] Rom. iii. 24, 25. [2] 2 Cor. v. 19.
[3] St. John xii. 41. Compare Isa. vi. 1, sqq.

Did He not still the tempest and raise the dead? Was He not terrible and majestic even in the very crisis of His utmost humiliation, so that the soldiers who came to take Him went backward and fell to the ground, and Pilate was the more afraid as he marked more closely His awful silence, and the pagan centurion confessed His Divinity, and the heaven was overcast, and the earth shaken, and the rocks rent, when He gave up His Human Soul to His Father? Does not Scripture speak of the wrath of the Lamb, of the judgment-seat of Christ, and of the God of the new covenant as a Consuming Fire no less than the Jehovah of the old? When was He, in the days of the apostles, last seen? "I turned," says the beloved disciple, "to see the voice of Him that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." And mark, brethren, it is the disciple who had lain on His breast at supper who adds, "when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."[1] Or else, He is seated upon a white horse, and named Faithful and True, judging and making war in righteousness; and His eyes are as a flame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He has a Name written, that no man knows but He Himself, and He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite

[1] Rev. i. 12-17.

the nations: and He rules with a rod of iron, and He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God: and He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, *King of kings, and Lord of lords.*[1] And consistently with this representation of St. John, St. Paul years before had declared that in His own good time the Redeemer would be "revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not His Gospel."[2] Does not the Church, His bride, address her enthroned Lord in accents of trembling supplication, "Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious Blood, and be not angry with us for ever?" Can any sin-stained child of man, asks the penitent, approach such a Being as this, and anticipate a welcome? least of all—can I?

Nor is this all. The nearer sight of Jesus opens upon the soul a fuller revelation of the real character of the past. He had already condemned himself; true—but he had viewed sin in the light of a few present results or apprehended consequences. He had contrasted his famished spirit with their lot who still enjoyed the least share in the bounties of his long-left home. He had faced his too-possible future, "I perish with hunger." So is it generally. "Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off."[3] Men leave the ways of sin, or rise or resolve to leave them, because sin palls upon them, because they feel that in this world its wages are bitter, and because they foresee, more or less clearly, the terrors of the next. But to draw near that Light in which we see light, by Which the eyes are turned away from beholding vanity, and the heart illumined "with the knowledge of the glory

[1] Rev. xix. 11-16. [2] 2 Thess. i. 8. [3] Hos. viii. 5.

of God in the Face of Jesus Christ,"[1]—this is to learn in a measure God's estimate of sin, in itself and in its consequences. It is to exchange the human standard of sin and of holiness for the Divine. It is to see in sin not merely the loss of God's friendship, not merely the forfeiture of all spiritual endowments, not merely the penal servitude which follows upon the departure of the spirit of freedom, not merely the tribulation and anguish of a guilty conscience, the worm which dieth not, the going mourning all the day long; it is to behold in unforgiven, deadly sin, the very death of the soul which harbours it; a death which does not become a resurrection because time passes, and habits change, and friends smile, and passion cools, and the tomb of the soul is bedecked (as of yore the Tuscan sepulchres) with the utensils and imagery of life; a death which lasts, though the natura life of the soul survive vigorous and active in the things of earth, and even though concerning the things of heaven it emulates spiritual vitality in language and bearing, and observance and habit, galvanising for the moment intellect, will, affections, imagination; a death, I say, which lasts,—since there remains but the corpse of a soul from which the spirit has fled, whose every movement is impeded by the cerements which bind it while it jangles its frame and scatters around it its fetid corruption, in acting its ghastly mimicry of life. Absolute, indeed, is the law that "the soul which sinneth it shall die;" and the penitent finds that he is bringing to the Great Restorer not a maimed or blind, or possessed or dumb, but a lifeless spirit; recently dead it may be, like the ruler's daughter, or going forth to burial, like the widow's son, or laid in the grave and stinking, like Lazarus;—yet in any case lifeless to the apprehension of saints and angels, and before the throne of Christ. He

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

looks up imploringly to the Being Whose Face he seeks. But has not sin blasted His image? has it not crucified afresh the Holy Manhood? has it not quenched the Spirit? has it not denied to the great Creator His dominion, to the Almighty Father His authority, to the Universal Monarch His true throne in the heart? has it not spurned His unity by making idols of a hundred passions which have the heart for an altar, and the affections for servants, and the soul and its eternity for a sacrifice? has it not insulted His holiness by dragging a consecrated nature through the mire of passion? has it not ignored His Omnipotence, since the sinner has sinned beneath His very Eye, almost in His bosom? does it not scorn alike His wisdom and His justice? is it not a challenge to His forbearance? does it not, as far as possible, deny God's very existence? The penitent feels this; and here he *might* trust that his Lord could quicken the dead, and could forgive the insult and the wrong were it not that here he sees a new aspect of sin, to which, my brethren, I invite your earnest attention. He sees that after the will of the sinner is changed, or even when his heart has ceased to beat, the consequences of his sin remain as a fact, as a blot, as a scar in the universe of God, marring its perfection, disturbing its harmonies, destructive of its beauty and of its peace. Peter must have marked the fiendish triumph which hardened the hearts of his tempters in the courtyard, and Magdalen must have known many whom her seductions had banished from the Face of God, and the penitent thief saw, in the moment of his acceptance, a companion, led on perchance to crime by his example and encouragement, dying with the accents of blasphemy on his lips in the very Presence of the All-holy. A child can light the match, and fire the charge of that marvellous artillery which, as we have recently heard, carries destruction to

the verge of a distant horizon; but can he control the instruments of death when once the spark is lighted? Even so in the moral world, the penitent comes to Jesus laden, not merely with the tokens of a numbed and deadened soul, not merely with the guilt of a repudiated, an insulted God, but with the consciousness,—the terrible haunting consciousness,—that his sin has spread as widely as his influence, that he has launched forth upon society, upon the Church, and into souls, the bolts of disease and death; that no penitence, however deep, can arrest that wave of impulse which he has given to evil by his example, by his words, by his endeavours, and which will roll on collaterally to far-distant societies of men, and downwards to yet unborn generations, to strengthen Satan's strength, and to increase his resources, while it mocks the helpless anguish of the author of so much misery, who is powerless to arrest that for which he yet knows himself to be responsible. The penitent quivers with this terrible overwhelming perception of the consequences of his guilt,—can he, dare he, *hope* for welcome from his Saviour?

III.

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

His Father *saw* the returning prodigal. True, He had seen him all along. He had marked that first disobedience, that first tempest of anger, that act of boyish deceit, that conversation with schoolfellows on forbidden subjects, that joke in church or at sacred things, which won credit for pleasantry and wit, and which escaped notice and punishment. The Father had marked the steady growth of passion, of indulgence, of impatience of restraint, of self-will: He had noted the

thoughts and words which soiled the baptismal robe and dimmed the baptismal cross; He knew that first act in which the soul had its unfettered and conscious choice to make between the enemy and Himself, and in which it chose His enemy; and then He had noted how a passing pang of remorse had yielded to a new hardness of heart, which its victim thought spirited and manly; how those feeble prayers were first shortened, and then left off altogether; how those early yearnings for innocence and for God were scorned as the mere poetry and sentiment of childhood, unacquainted as yet with the capacities of man and the prizes of indulgence; how action had become habit, and habit a second nature, justifying sin to itself on the grounds of experience and of precedent, and searing whatever yet was left of love and of tenderness, and of the grace of regeneration. The Father had seen all, since even though His erring children go down to hell He is there also; if they take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, they are still beneath the Eye Which never slumbers nor sleeps, still in the Hand Which grasps the universe. He knew all the degradation, and the shame, and the disappointment, and the sickening weariness of His "far-off" son; His quick Eye had noted the first symptoms of amendment, His delicate Ear had caught the first faint longing for the home and the peace which had been left; for the unwearied pleading of His own Spirit had framed the very utterance to which He hearkened,—"Thou hast heard the desire of the poor, Thou preparest their heart, and Thine ear hearkeneth thereto."[1] He Who never leaves the sinner, Who, if He withdraws His grace, withdraws not His being and presence, is ever ready to welcome the penitent, though indeed he is "yet a great way off." Mark, then, brethren, the first character of

[1] Ps. x. 19.

this welcome, the readiness with which it is offered. Our Lord does not keep us in suspense with Joseph's brethren at the court of Pharaoh; He does not make as though He heareth not; these trials are reserved for later stages of service. The 32nd Psalm opens to us the quick sensitiveness of the Heart of Jesus to the yearning of the soul which seeks Him. No sooner has the soul resolved to make its prayer in a time when our Saviour may still be found, mindful of the waterfloods of disease and death in which it may not come nigh Him, sure now of a place to hide it in, to preserve it from trouble, to compass it with songs of deliverance, than He answers from His cross or His throne in human words, "I will inform and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go, and I will guide thee with Mine eye."[1] Was it not thus, dear brethren, with the Magdalen? He the Very Purity of God sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, and thither, sinner that she was, she came. The proud Pharisee cared not that she came into his presence, if she only touched *him* not; he thought not of the ruin of that young and beautiful soul, if she only respected his legal requirements; she may "stand weeping behind" his guests, but he heeds her not. And now she has come near to Jesus, that she, in her impurity, may pour her unguents on His sacred Form,—and she holds her hand. She reads in His Eye, in His mien, in His expression so calm, so awful, so tender, so subduing, more than the Pharisee read there. Into that moment were compressed all the many and long experiences of the returning prodigal. She sees herself, beneath That Eye, as never before—uncomely, loathsome, hideous, vile. She sees that though her attractions are not less fascinating than of old, though the lustre of her eye has not dimmed nor

[1] Ps. xxxii. 9. Cf. Bp. Horsley, *in loc.*, for the relation of this verse to the rest of the Psalm.

the beauty of her cheek faded, yet that she is a temple of seven devils. She crouches beneath That Eye, but she cannot escape It; if It is mournful It is yet encouraging, if It pierces It yet draws her forward. It rivets her to the earth; she must sink; but there is a place for her, even for her, at His sacred Feet, to hear in His good time the pardoning words, and to offer her meed of service. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God." "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." He does not send her forth; for He is there, even in that banquet-hall, to seek and to save; she brings with her no preparation, no change of habit, no provisions against the criticism and scorn of the world; but she loves, and she sorrows as they sorrow who love, and He Who knows her heart absolves her: "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much."[1]

2. For, in truth, His Soul, His Human Soul, was touched with compassion. The Father, you remember, saw and had compassion—the second mark of the great welcome. The world, too, is quick to see; but there is a vast difference between the Spirit of Jesus Christ and the practice of the world in this matter of sin and sinners; a difference which was never more striking, more appalling, than in the age and country in which we live. The world has no mercy for sinners who outrage its propriety. It does not care for secret sin, for sins of thought, and will, and temper, for the mental and moral corruption, which is its own vital atmosphere, and hateful only to the everlasting God. But when sin touches the fabric of society, and the outward consistencies of life, how often is quarter denied to the sinner. The world sees the sinner, certainly; so does our Saviour Christ. But the world sees that outcast woman only to point the finger of warning and of scorn, while in its literature, in

[1] St. Luke vii. 36, 47; Hos. xiii. 9.

its conversation, in its tone of mind, it dallies with the soft luxurious poison of which she is the outward, visible, ulcerated expression. Jesus, our Lord and Master, Who denounces sin, in the teeth of the world, as the greatest and only evil, can afford, precisely because He is Infinite Purity, to be infinitely tender and compassionate to sinners. It is not merely a shepherdless multitude which calls forth the anxious compassion of our holy Saviour; He yearns with a true human love over every soul that wanders from Him, or that has not found Him; He loves and yearns for multitudes, not as viewing them in the mass, like the philanthropist, who weakens his desire by making it general, but because He yearns for the single souls of which multitudes are composed; He sees and loves each separate soul as if it were alone in the world, and as if for it alone He had come to die; "He loved me," cries an Apostle, who calls himself the chief of sinners, "and gave Himself for me."[1] Forget or deny the Church's assertion that He is "perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," and you shiver to atoms the hope of the penitent.[2] What but literal union with Godhead could enable a human intellect to survey without error or distraction the race of man? What but a human heart can really calm the fears of the shrinking penitent? Touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and having been in all points tempted like as we are, our Lord and Saviour regards His separate penitents with the tenderest pity. He makes the largest allowances; He measures guilt by responsibility, and welcomes the ignorance or compulsion which lessen it; so that when the penitent's self-accusation is most bitter and unsparing, the compassion of our indulgent Lord is most touchingly abundant. Think you not that as He hung upon the cross He passed in review

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

[2] Athanasian Creed.

all that might be pleaded for the thief that hung beside Him, and for whom He was shedding His Blood—the want of religious instruction, the bad early associates, the weak sense of right and wrong, the provocations of the Roman rule, the evident and repulsive hollowness of the popular religion of the day, a hot natural temperament, or strong animal spirits? These things do not justify; God forbid! the Blood Which flowed from His Wounds alone could cleanse; but these things were not forgotten. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him," even when fear is strange and new to them; for "He knoweth whereof we are made, He remembereth that we are but dust."[1] Think, dear brethren, of His Body stiffening with the deep gashes of the scourge, of His Face defiled with spittle and gore, of His Eyes reddened with weeping, of His Mouth parched with thirst, of the sickening agony of His fainting Spirit, as the blasphemies or mocking of the crowd that surged beneath Him passed before His glazed Eye or fell on His dulled Ear, and the cold drops —the tokens of the death-struggle—gathered on His Brow, and then think of that response to the cry of the thief beside Him, so self-forgetting, so all-forgiving, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,"[2] and doubt, if you can, the tenderness of the reception which awaits those who truly seek Him now.

3. He *ran*. Ought he not to have consulted his own insulted authority by waiting for his son's approach? Ought he not to have concealed the pity which filled his heart at the sight of that famished, broken prodigal? Should he not have at least *looked* stern, and used cold, distant words, to mark his just sense of so much ingratitude and so much guilt? Might not such judicious severity have taught that young libertine a lesson?

[1] Ps. ciii. 13, 14. [2] St. Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

Could it—could any treatment disappoint the prodigal? Was it not all, and more than all, he dared hope for, that he should look once more upon that father's countenance, though from among the slaves that thronged the courts of his palace or tilled his fields? Ah, brethren! you are thinking of a human parent, but the Gospel speaks of the Universal Father. Your criticism might be just, if you had to provide safeguards for the future peace of an earthly family which welcomed a spendthrift child to its deserted bosom. But measure not heaven by earth, nor dream that the love of God, any more than His justice or His power, is dwarfed down to the proportions of the human endowment which faintly shadows it. "Look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth: so great is His mercy also towards them that fear Him."[1] All in God is infinite, as His power and His justice, so also His mercy and His loving-kindness, and therefore He runs to meet the penitent. He is utterly forgetful of His own dignity; He makes Himself of no reputation; He empties Himself of His glory; He can dispense with appearances; He will go forward to meet that erring child who has turned to seek Him. What, indeed, is this but His very Spirit, Who, when He was rich with the glories of an eternity, for our sakes became poor in human guise, that we, through His poverty, might be rich?[2] Yes, Christ our Lord does indeed run to meet the penitent. He does not say, Learn to pray, learn to keep thy conscience in order, learn to guard thy looks, thy thoughts, thy tongue, ere I receive thee. He does not say, Acquire the ways, the motives, the language, the tone of the Redeemed Family, before I restore thee to thy place among them. He does not say, Bring faith and hope and love in thy heart, and deeds of mercy in thy hand, and words of charity on thy lips, that I may justly rank thee side by side with those who

[1] Ps. ciii. 11. [2] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

wear My likeness, who serve and love Me. How indeed could the penitent ever be restored, if the Father held this language? How could the penitent recover, without Christ's Aid and Presence, the robe of grace, if the highest saints in His kingdom—ay, they on their thrones in paradise—confess that of themselves they are not sufficient to do anything as of themselves, but that all their sufficiency is of God? Believe it, He Who died to save us, asks only for a trustful and a broken heart. Bring this, His own earliest and most blessed gift, and in His own time He will do the rest. The soul must be first reconciled; the havoc of sin must be gradually repaired after reconciliation. In time, Christian temper and purity, and thoughts, and yearnings will be given back to the soul when it is securely harboured within the fold of the Good Shepherd. But while as yet sinners can neither meditate, nor hope, nor pray, nor work; while they lie in their weakness and in their misery, longing for strength, mourning over their corruption, there is a welcome from Jesus, Who goes forth to meet, and, if they only will, to bless and to lead them.

IV.

"He ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." At length, then, they met. The penitent can find no words: in his shame and his weakness he is silent before that astonishing Love, he cannot face the rebuke of that open-handed Compassion. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee."[1] The very

[1] Hosea xi. 8, 9.

heavens are not clean in the sight of the Holy One, and His angels He has charged with folly, yet He clasps to His very Bosom the sin-stained and the lost of earth. The angels worship in trembling and afar off, but the Being Whom they adore draws the sinner with cords of a man, with bands of love, as if that sinner were His only child, ay, His equal and associate. This it is to be laid on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, while He bids His angels rejoice that He has found the sheep that He had lost. This it is to be found by His holy Church, who by her ministers sweeps the house of the world diligently till the lost silver be recovered, and then calls on the citizens of heaven, her friends and neighbours, to partake her joy. This it is to feel, after the darkness and the death of sin, the first keen sense of unspeakable delight at being quickened together with Christ, at sitting together with Him in the heavenly places of His Church. Oh moment never to be forgotten by those who have experienced it, never to be remembered but with thankfulness and awe! Oh moment of sensible nearness to God, of heaven-sent love, of hope which had no future in the blessedness of the present, of faith which was all but sight, how canst thou ever perish from the heart that has experienced thee! Doubtless ever since the penitent has loved and prayed, and laboured and resolved: but how comparatively feeble seem his resolutions, how small his toils, how few and lifeless his prayers, how cold his love, when he recalls the strength, the promise, the anticipations, the superhuman force (as it seemed) of that first sense of what it is to be seen and pitied, and met and embraced by a deserted God,—while attendant angels chaunt into the entranced ear the will of the Almighty Saviour,—"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily,

and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon."[1] Think not that you can gauge that intertwining of the human spirit with the Everlasting God by your earthly theories of a physical reaction or of peculiarities of temperament. There are other things both in earth and in heaven than are dreamt of by a materialised philosophy, which lives in what it sees, which diligently maps out the earth and the stars, and interprets history, and analyses thought, but which lives and dies in ignorance of the truest and greatest subject of human observation and research,—the wonders of the kingdom of grace and of the love of God.

"He fell on his neck and kissed him." Oh too tender Father, hast Thou then forgotten all,—how haughtily this child demanded his portion, how contemptuously, how ungratefully he quitted Thee? Is it nothing that he has wasted his substance, enfeebled his body, stained his soul, dishonoured Thy name, spurned Thy love, mocked Thy sorrow? Has it escaped Thee that only the extremity of his misery, only the fear of a lingering and painful death first turned his thoughts towards Thee; and that if he had prospered in sin, he would have spurned Thee for ever? Yes, it is even so. That penitent, who has nothing to offer and nothing to plead, is in the embrace of his Saviour. The Arms which were stretched upon the tree that they might compass a redeemed world, are flung around that single soul with intense and passionate affection. No true penitent has missed that embrace, that felt experience of the love of Christ which kindles in his soul a love, strong to quicken its deadness and to cleanse its stains. It is His embrace—the Arms are His—the print of the nails is there; it is His divine and heart-subduing welcome, Who died for all, even for the vilest

[1] Hosea xiv. 4-6.

and the most perverse, and the hardest and the foulest sinners, "that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again."[1]

It is not for me to anticipate a subject which has been assigned to another by dwelling on the gifts which crowned the welcome—the robe or stole of innocence, the ring of espousal to the heavenly Bridegroom, the sandals which suggest and assist obedience, the fatted calf, the Eucharistic Feast. Only let me insist upon the blessed truth, that for all who have sinned and will seek their Saviour there is a good hope, nay, a certainty, of being received by Him. Moreover, these welcomes of our Lord to penitents are in all time the really great events of the Kingdom of Grace. They are no mere luxury or ornament of the age of the Apostles, designed to help the infant Church through the early struggles of its otherwise precarious existence. They are the reiterated products of the influence of the Holy Spirit, and of the intercession of our Lord. The world abounds in every age with every type of the prodigal. In every age Christ our Lord welcomes the Magdalen and Zacchæus, and Peter and the dying thief. Silently but surely the blessed word goes forward, while the world toils or sleeps without suspecting it. The wind bloweth where it listeth; and while here and there men are startled by the manifest tokens of a Heavenly Visitant, by companions in whose lives "old things have passed away, and all things have become new," yet on the whole, whence it cometh and whither it goeth, men care not to inquire. Still the blessed work goes forward. It was for this end that Christ our Lord laid aside His glory, and lay as an Infant in the manger, and encountered the fiend in the desert, and lived a Life of holy poverty, and conversed familiarly with publicans

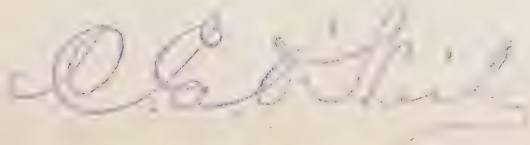
[1] 2 Cor. v. 15.

and sinners. It was that He might thus "see of the travail of His Soul and be satisfied" that He poured forth that Soul in agony, and gave Himself up to His enemies, and stood silent before His judges, and wore the robe of mockery, and endured the spitting and the scourge, and sank beneath His Cross, and rested not till the work was accomplished, and the cup of bitterness was emptied to the dregs.

For this end, that He might welcome penitents, He has pleaded before His Father for eighteen hundred years; for this He has filled His Church with the gift of sympathy, with humble, and Christ-like, and loving hearts, and has, moreover, "given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins;" for this, and this alone, He forbears, as you heard last Friday, to wind up the world's history, and to perfect the number of His elect. This welcome it is which is the living expression of His love, the full explanation of His long-suffering. Are there here any who would fain be His, but who tremble at the thought of facing Him? Dear brethren, defraud not your Saviour of the earnings of His Passion; frustrate not His providences of mercy towards yourselves. See how your own life, read rightly, points to one only end. It is years since you left Him, if, indeed, you ever served Him at all. Be it so. But why couldest thou not escape from the tender reproachful glance of that mourning mother? Why was that companion suddenly cut off in the prime of his days? Why was that scheme from which so much was hoped of success and of distinction suddenly converted into a disappointment? Why didst thou lie upon a bed of pain, tossing in agony of body and restlessness of soul; impatient of the company of others, yet miserable when alone; unable to bear the present, yet still more unable

to look the future in the face? Why, when life seemed so bright, was thy sky overclouded on that day of heart-broken agony, when the partner of thy joys, or the first-born of thy body, was laid in the dust? For those who serve God, the sorrows which are traced as a handwriting upon the wall of life admit of many interpretations; but for the sinner who is yet "afar off," the warning they utter is continuously, unvaryingly, awfully *one*. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."[1] This Lent may be the accepted time, the day of salvation, to many here in the counsels of eternity. Scheme not for your future, attempt no terms with God: it is surely enough, should He bid a sinner live in His household as a hired servant among the lowest and the last, according to the desire of the penitent, if only there may be still a place within. Leave what remains to Him, but seek Him without delay. "Come unto Me,"—they are His own blessed words,—come unto Me Who have taken flesh and shed My Blood for sinners; unto Me Whose delights are with the sons of men, unto Me with Whom there is mercy and plenteous redemption, unto Me Who wait to save to the uttermost those who take Me at My word; come unto Me, as I rule from My throne, as I hang upon My cross; come to be cleansed by My Blood, and sanctified by My Spirit, and changed into My likeness; come unto Me, all, whoever ye be that travail and are heavy laden with the load and misery of your sins, and I—Who alone can do it—"I will give you rest."[2]

[1] Isa. lv. 7. [2] St. Matt. xi. 28.



SERMON II.

THE AIM AND PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH MISSIONS.[1]

1 Cor. xi. 22.

That I might by all means save some.

GREAT and saintly characters are generally swayed by a few powerful motives. And here we have one of the master-motives which controlled the soul and shaped the efforts of the greatest of the Church's missionaries. The curtain is for the moment drawn aside; and we see one of the main-springs of that mighty heart which throbbed with the sympathies and cares of apostolic Christendom. "That I might by all means save *some*." How moderate, we exclaim, his expectations! It were something to conquer the world in His Master's Name to the obedience of the Cross! It were something to live for ages in the calendars of the Universal Church; and to be blessed by an untold posterity as one to whom, under God, millions have owed that blessed possession of the Faith which is more precious than life itself! But the Apostle's gaze, instead of ranging over the empire of the world, or the grateful acknowledgments of spiritual descendants, is deliberately narrowed down, not barely to the surrounding multitudes whom in a greater or less degree he may hope to *influence*, but to the few elect spirits whom it will be his high privilege to *save*. "That I may by all means *save* some." For those few he becomes as a Jew to the

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, London (on behalf of St. George's Mission, East London), on Tuesday, November 27, 1860.

Jews, as weak to the weak, as all things to all men.[1] For them, he passes his days "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings."[2] For this object, he endures every variety of suffering, mental and physical. And our first impulse is to ask, how such a motive can have exacted the obedience of so strong a will as was St. Paul's? And whether his life of incessant self-sacrifice be not altogether out of proportion to the anticipated result? "That I might by all means save—not *all*, not even *many*—but *some*."

Let us weigh his words, brethren, that we may see whether they do not offer an explanation. The motive is not a passing one; it appears elsewhere. In the Epistle to the Romans, for example, he magnifies his office as Apostle of the Gentiles, with the deliberate purpose of provoking to emulation his kinsmen the Jews, in the hope that emulation might provoke inquiry, and inquiry make a home for faith—"if by any means I might save some of them!"[3] So here, "That I may by all means save *some*." Do you ask, *some* what? The context will reply, *some* "weak" Christians, *some* Jews "under the law," *some* "without law," as the Gentiles—in any case, *some men*. And what is man? The statesman sees in man only a restless being who must be employed and taxed and kept in order. The military leader sees in him so much muscle and sinew, so much capacity for attack or for resistance, this or that amount of raw material force, and of intelligence which may make such force available. The man of the world holds that life is a drama, and all the men and women merely players, whose responsibilities cease when the curtain falls; and he naturally values and studies each fellow-man just so far as each is useful, or agreeable, or annoying, or

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 20-22. [2] 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. [3] Rom. xi. 14.

antagonistic to himself. To the artist again man is but a form, an outline, beautiful indeed and rich in expression and plentifully suggestive of moral ideas, but valuable and precious to him as a landscape or a ruin may be valuable —valuable as the provender of art, as the material and means of livelihood. In short, in his natural state, man views his brother as a part—an important part it may be —of that combination of circumstances which surrounds himself, and accordingly he studies and values him just so far as he bears upon his own occupation or enjoyment. It is needless to add that such an estimate, cramped as it is by a pervading selfishness of motive, is, necessarily, and always, partial, external, unjust.

No, my brethren, if you seek for a disinterested and worthy love of mankind, you must seek it within His Church, Who Alone has loved for man's own sake, and Who made His Apostles fishers of men.[1] St. Paul, too, had his view of human kind, but it was not that of the man of pleasure, nor yet that of the general or the politician, not that of the poet or the painter. He saw in every child of Adam that which was more noble and precious than the most precious and noble of material and earthly prizes: he looked not at the temporary accidents of man, not at his race, or lineage, or possessions, or position,—he scanned not the beauty of his bodily form, nor yet the endowments of his understanding. He put all these aside, as things for which he had neither sympathy nor appreciation: he knew that birth is but a disposition of providence, that means and position become worthless in a last illness, that the earthly body will one day slough off like the shell of some chrysalis bursting into a higher life, that all knowledge which is not spiritual is surely destined "to vanish away." He gazed intently perseveringly down, till he encountered

[1] St. Matt. iv. 19.

in each man his real self—the undying spirit which underlies voice, and look, and stature, and means, and acquirements, and position, and all that mass of accidents which overlay and intercept it from the general view. And yearning over the multitude of men thus penetratingly, he prayed and struggled that he might save some of them.

I say some of them;—not all, not even many, but some. He might have said one: for that any sinful child of Adam should be God's instrument not for influencing, not for improving, but for saving one soul, is a signal and astonishing act of God's grace and mercy.

I.

And we shall understand this better by considering a few of those simple truths concerning the soul which are doubtless familiar to us, my brethren, from childhood, but which we too generally and habitually neglect, precisely on account of our long familiarity with them.

1. Reflect, then, that St. Paul beheld in every human being a soul which was destined to live for ever. He did not entertain this idea as a questionable and passing speculation. It was to him an absolute certainty. Heathens, we know, led alike by traditions without and by instincts within, had made what, when tested by argument, might seem no better than a happy guess at the immortality of the soul. They saw that spirit was distinct from body in its nature and in its properties. The body might perish; but could it be supposed that the action of that air or water or fire which decomposes the corpse or the plant could touch the spirit, which has neither parts nor shape, which is as simple, as indivisible, as subtle as thought? The body might perish; but if the particles of matter whereof the body is composed perish not, and survive to enter into new combinations, shall it be said that the spirit, the noblest part of man, fares

worse at death than the very smallest and vilest particle of that body in which it has been enshrined through life? The body might perish; but the soul which has hitherto seen and heard through the bodily organs, is not therefore to be reduced to a state of stupor and of death, unless indeed those organs were really the seat of sensations, instead of the mere instrument of their conveyance to the soul within. And does not that longing for posthumous fame, so intense in heathendom, point to a deep presentiment of a coming life? Does not that restless desire for happiness, which is unsatisfied even with the empire of the world, and equally unsatisfied by a retirement from its cares,[1] point to a future, in which, if it will, the living heart of man may be laid to rest, in which it will have ceased to chase a spectre which eludes pursuit? . . . Still at best the immortality of the soul was to the heathen thinker as a precarious conjecture. It was reserved for our Divine Lord to raise it for ever to the rank of a certainty. He tore aside the veil and brought life and immortality to light.[2] He made the immortality of the soul an element which has since entered practically into all the calculations of those who have received Him.

All of St. Paul's thoughts and aspirations and efforts were coloured by the overshadowing presence of this tremendous truth. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."[3] "We know that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens."[4] These and other like passages assume undoubtedly the knowledge of additional truths; but they proceed upon the fact of the soul's immortality as certain; and you will further observe that within the pale of the Church of Christ it has never from the first, until now, been a matter of controversy.

[1] Tacitus, Annals, vi. 6. [2] 2 Tim. i. 10. [3] 2 Cor. v. 10. [4] 2 Cor. v. 1

Brethren, is the Apostle's estimate also yours? Do you, as you walk the streets of this vast metropolis, dwell also upon the thought, that beneath each anxious countenance, each poverty-stricken form that meets your eye, there is lodged a principle of imperishable life? Believing that the soul cannot, if it would, cease to be, do you attempt to realise its exceeding preciousness? Compared with this undying germ of life, what is any one of the perishing baubles that are so often preferred to it? What is property, position, influence—what are the pleasures of sense or of understanding—what even the sweet enjoyments of home and friends, when placed side by side with that which differs from them as the immortal differs from the things of time? Our Lord's words furnish matter for sober calculation to many who in this great home and mart of commerce can determine the relative worth of their every possession, save only of that one, which is unlike all others, in that it lives for ever. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"[1] These words of the Master may serve to explain, in some degree, the deep yearnings of the Apostle, that, of these spirits, ordained by the Creator to be centres of an existence as everlasting as His own, he might save even *some*.

2. Every soul of man, then, whether for weal or woe, lives for ever. Every soul lives a life as everlasting as the glories of heaven or as the pains of hell. But to this first truth about the soul we must add a second, which was keenly present to the mind of the Apostle. Every soul lives a life which is utterly and fundamentally separate from all that lives around it. This separateness exists amid much that looks like oneness. There are certain features or processes common to all souls, although in different degrees—such as memory, understanding, and will. All, again, have some share in common

[1] St. Mark viii. 36.

instincts, such as awe and wonder, admiration, and the like. Again, one system of education will produce a type of mind and habit of thought more or less uniform. Or again, peculiarities of character are rubbed off, and outward sameness is attained by mixing with the general world.

Thus there are many common points observable in those who live during the same period of the world's history. There are more in citizens of the same country, in men of the same profession, in members of the same family. We are too often carried away, in our habits of thought, by this seeming unity. We class men in masses. We think of them habitually as belonging to an age, a nation, a profession, a family, as a living whole. We observe in them instances of some general laws of race or of society, and we forget that beneath this surface-unity which meets the eye and moulds the thought, there is in each human being a spiritual existence, which is separated by a fathomless chasm from all other existences, and which is, for ever, its own. In this sense every man is necessarily his own centre. He has his own ruling passions, his own dominant ideas—he loves and wills and thinks by acts which are shared by none without him. It is he who is the real seat of life, and not the nation or family or order of men with which we associate him. "Be not afraid," said our Lord, "of them that kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do."[2] Nothing without the soul can crush out or even touch its existence as a soul. In the abyss of that existence, with its own hopes and fears, with its past moral and spiritual history unshared by any other being in the creation of God, it lives, necessarily, with itself, in utter severance from all other centres of undying life.

> "Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
> Our hermit spirits dwell."[2]

[1] St. Luke xii. 4. [2] *The Christian Year*: Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

And this separate life of the human soul lasts, we know, beyond the grave; it lasts for ever. Many men never realise it until they come to die. Then the appearance of unity with other life, upon which they have hitherto rested, melts away. The common dress, the common mother-tongue, the common objects of belief or affection, the outward conformity of habit and the inner sympathy of thought, can no longer hide from the single sinking spirit its awful separateness from all around it. It is forced forth from that seeming community of life into the contemplation of its own solitary nakedness as it passes behind the veil. Death is to many not merely a wrench from earthly and visible existence; it is an appalling discovery, for the first time, of a truth which has been always true. "I shall die alone," exclaimed Pascal: and those who would bear the solitariness of death, should live in the conviction that the truest, deepest life of their spirits is unshared by and incommunicable to any other, from that moment wherein each spirit sprang forth from the Hand of God into unconscious life, onward to the most distant point that can be conceived in a boundless future.

"All live unto Him."[1] All who once lived, as we live upon earth, live now, as truly, in the unseen world. They live unto God, that is to say, in intense perception of the separateness of their single spirits beneath His Eye. Some, like the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar, yearning and interceding for the final change.[2] Noah, Abraham, David, the Prophets, and Apostles and Martyrs, live each of them not merely in the memories of men and in the Sacred Books, but in the World of Spirits. They are alive at this very moment, thinking, loving, praising, acknowledging, adoring. They are in possession of a life, of whose quickened, strong, transcendent energies, we

[1] St. Luke xx. 38. [2] Rev. vi. 9, 10.

can form no just conception. And Pharaoh, Balaam, Saul, Ahab, Judas, Felix, Demas, all the persecutors of the Church, all the inventors of heresy and error, all the authors of great crimes, each scourge and curse of his generation,—they too live, where, we know not, waiting for judgment and the endless doom. And those whom we have known and loved, and who have passed away, they too live each one his separate inextinguishable life in the other world, noting it may be the silent march of the providences and designs of God, and anticipating, with whatever shade of joy or terror, the advancing Judgment.

Brethren, it may be, you have at times of great mental suffering, or by the aid of heaven-sent glances into the world of spiritual realities, apprehended, at least for a time, that within you is a spirit that must live by itself for ever. But do you habitually feel that this truth is true of all human beings around you,—not merely of the meditative, and prayerful, and conscientious, but of each one among the ignorant, or the poor, or the blaspheming multitudes who scoff at the thought of an eternity to the gate of which they are hurrying on? Do you realise the fact that the soul of that criminal who will presently fall under the hand of justice is also a centre of life profound and eternal; and therefore as difficult to win as your own, and withal as precious in His sight Who made it? If these are not our thoughts, they were, at least, his who was versatile, and self-sacrificing, and courageous, and tender, that he might win to the Author and End of their existence at least some few spirits, who as yet were blind to the meaning and the mysteriousness of life. "That I might save some of them."

3. These considerations might in a measure help to account for the Apostle's numberless and untiring exertions in the interests of the human soul. But those

interests had another, deeper, stronger claim upon his time and his strength. They were also the cause of Jesus Christ. The Everlasting Son had beheld the misery of a world of spirits, whereof each was endowed with a separate immortal life, yet drifting far from the One Source and Law and Object of existence. He looked down from Heaven to see if there was any that would understand and seek after God. They had all gone out of the way; they had altogether become abominable.[1] Then, in the fulness of His love, He dismissed His Angels, and emptied Himself of His glory.[2] The Infinite God would submit Himself to bonds; the All-pure would be a victim for sin. Being found in fashion as a Man, He is laid as an Infant in the manger; He is lifted up as a world-redeeming Sacrifice upon the Cross. He dies not for a class, an order, a race; He dies for all men. God would have all men to be saved. The One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, gave Himself a Ransom for all.[3] He did not indeed put force upon His creature, or compel its acceptance of His proffered love. He crushed not that liberty wherewith He had endowed the soul, even when, in suicidal madness, it put aside the Hand that was reached forth to save it. Still, in intention, He died that all might live; and if many are called but few chosen, His mercy calls the many, and man's wilfulness determines the few. He died for all in such sort, that He died with the full and direct intention of redeeming each. Each separate, undying soul was a worthy object of our Redeemer's love. You and I may say with the Apostle, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."[4] Although millions of souls were in His heart, the name of each redeemed spirit is graven upon the palms of His pierced Hands. Think you that as St. Paul gazed upon the

[1] Ps. xiv. 1-3; liii. 1; Rom. iii. 10-12.
[2] Phil. ii. 7.
[3] 1 Tim. ii. 4-6.
[4] Gal. ii. 20.

Crucified he could not follow the reflection of St. John, "If He laid down His life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren"? Assuredly he could. "Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves."[1] "Necessity is laid upon me."[2] "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians."[3] The most Precious Blood had put a new price upon the human spirit. Side by side with the fearful mystery of sin, and the tinsel worthlessness of the world, It proclaimed to every believing heart the surpassing value of the human soul. For the human soul It flowed from the Saviour's side into the Fonts and Chalices of the Church; It quickened her teaching, her ordinances, her actions, with an unearthly force and beauty. Henceforth, "obedience and the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ"[4] were to be proclaimed to all in order that each might be sprinkled and obey. Could the Apostle think lightly of any the least, the humblest share in furthering the power and range of his Lord's high Redemptive work? If the salvation of one human soul might cost the Blood of the Infinite Son of God, is it, after all, a small thing at which a redeemed servant aims,—"that I might save some of them"?

4. For every man, dear brethren, is in one of two states which differ as Life differs from Death, and Heaven from Hell. Every man is in a state of grace and justification, or he is not. There are indeed gradations in the state of sin; some men are nearer the Kingdom of God than others. There are gradations again in the possession of the Divine Life, ranging from an incipient, perhaps half-unconscious, or well-nigh barren vitality, upwards to the efforts of an heroic sanctity, But this admission does not fill up the chasm which divides the living from the dead. "Know ye not," cried the Apostle, "that Jesus Christ is in

[1] 2 Cor. v. 15. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 16. [3] Rom. i. 14. [4] 1 St. Pet. i. 2.

you, except ye be reprobates?"[1] All with whom we pass our daily life, all whom we meet when travelling, all who pass us in the street, all who are at this moment in this crowded church, are seen of God to be written among the living in Jerusalem, or among the dead. The division lasts from age to age; it is not softened away by possible cases of what looks to us like a spiritual neutrality; it is absolutely exhaustive of the race of man. The line may be passed on this side of the grave; those who have lived may lapse into death; and those who are counted dead before God may rise to newness of life. But in another world there will be no such passage across the gulf that is fixed between the place of torment and the bosom of Abraham. There is no repentance in the grave, or pardon offered to the unholy dead. The tree will lie as it falls; and God's love will not falsify those threatenings against sin which it, no less than His justice, has so often uttered in the ear of the sinner. There is a state, upon which souls once on their trial have entered, (alas!) for ever, which forbids us, in the name of God's truth, to

> "trust that good shall fall,
> At last, far off, at last, to all."

There is a worm that dieth not;[2] a torment, whose smoke goeth up for ever and ever.[3]

Brethren, do you humbly trust that you are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord? Then you walk by faith and not by sight.[4] Then the infused grace of hope tells you that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you.[5] Then the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost;[6] and you love your God as the source and centre of all blessedness and perfection,

[1] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. [2] St. Mark ix. 44, 46, 48. [3] Rev. xiv. 11.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 7. [5] Rom. viii. 18. [6] Rom. v. 5.

and in Him, and for His sake, your fellow-creatures. Believing, hoping, loving, you rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.[1] You have, it is true, daily weaknesses, temptations, faults; but so long as the will consents not to deadly sin, "there is no condemnation for you who are in Christ Jesus."[2] You have humbling memories of the past, but your Lord has blotted out the handwriting that was against you, and taken it away, nailing it to His Cross.[3] You cannot escape the petty annoyances, or sterner trials, which ruffle the surface of the spirit; but at bottom, being justified by faith, you have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.[4] He, the First and the Last, is with you. His mighty Sacraments have made you members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones.[5] Christ in you is the Hope of glory;[6] for the Eternal Spirit has won for you the fulfilment of that mighty promise, "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."[7]

Such, if you live unto God, you know to be the Supernatural Life. You may not pride yourselves on a blessing which you have not earned. You may not forget those multitudes to whom as yet it has not been given. Around your homes, your churches, your paths, they sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.[8] They have sinned, and so come short of the glory of God.[9] They lie in the hell like sheep, and death gnaweth upon them.[10] While sin is unforgiven, there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.[11] While sin is unforgiven, there is no "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," but rather a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."[12] O piteous

[1] 1 St. Pet. i. 8. [2] Rom. viii. 1. [3] Col. ii. 14.
[4] Rom. v. 1. [5] Eph. v. 30. [6] Col. i. 27.
[7] St. John xiv. 23. [8] St. Luke i. 79. [9] Rom. iii. 23.
[10] Ps. xlix. 14. [11] Isa. lvii. 21. [12] 2 St. Pet. iii. 12; Heb. x. 27.

sight! multitudes of souls, so rich in the endowments of nature, so capable of that supreme blessedness for which God has made them, yet drinking in at every pore of their being the atmosphere of surrounding death, the "corruption that is in the world through lust,"[1] and only, as life waxes and wanes, "serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."[2] Suffer yourselves to reflect steadily on this certain fact: there are at this moment, in this city, multitudes who, like the Pagans of old, live, "having no hope, and without God in the world."[3] Without God! Ignorant of much which it is all-important to know concerning Him. Denying the little they have known concerning Him. Without Him! Yet, in the world. Exposed to its seductions, but without His strength. Exposed to its bitter injustice and scorn and hate, but without His tender and sustaining sympathy. Plunged in its whelming flood of corruption, but deprived of His sanctity and His preserving grace. Alas! do you condemn, cannot you pity, cannot you help them? Are there no high duties, is there no generous temper, no "princely spirit,"[4] which becomes those who know that they, all unworthy, have been redeemed from death? From the moment of his conversion the heart of St. Paul yearned with peculiar tenderness for those (whether Jews, or Gentiles, or Heretics, or lapsed Christians) who were severed from himself by the line which divides the spiritual world, but who stood, he could not forget it, where he too once had stood, and who were entitled to that free mercy which had been extended to him. "That I might save some of them." In the higher ranks of life there is a superficial polish which goes far to hinder the work of mercy by obscuring the field of action. The

[1] 2 St. Pet. i. 4.
[2] Titus iii. 3.
[3] Eph. ii. 12.
[4] רוּחַ נְדִיבָה Ps. li. 12.

deep difference exists, though all seems fair. The glacier is for the moment buried in snow, and to the inexperienced eye in the pale moonlight of this life all seems solid and trustworthy, but the Angels of God know that beside the firm solid footing there yawns ever the treacherous abyss. There is little or no disguise among the poor. With them sin pays little or none of the customary tribute of hypocrisy to virtue; it rules with a high hand; it flaunts itself in the highway and claims its supremacy; and we cannot say that there is danger of being mistaken when we carry spiritual oil and wine to those who lie its confessed and unpitied victims, waiting the passing by of the good Samaritan.

5. Without the sustaining grace of God any soul might commit any crime, however enormous. With the quickening grace of God every soul is capable of saintliness. There are metals and minerals which we cannot make useful. There are wild and fierce animals which we cannot tame. There are incurable diseases of the body, and memories that never retain, and understandings that cannot be brought to comprehend. But it is otherwise in the Realm of Grace. The coarsest, the vilest, the most unprincipled, the most cruel, and lustful, and vindictive may be changed and sanctified and crowned. If ancient Israel could boast of a faith like Abraham's, and of a purity like Joseph's, and of the meekness of the Great Lawgiver, and of the zeal of Phinehas, and of David's piety, and of Job's enduring patience, and of Daniel's courageous self-denial, shall the Church of Jesus Christ despair of lodging these graces, in their full Evangelical perfection, in any the most neglected soul? He Who had many souls who were ready to welcome Him at Corinth, has much people in the very worst neighbourhoods of this great city. By the beauty of His doctrine, and the mighty grace of His Sacraments, He can every-

where make the wilderness blossom as the rose.[1] Every man, through Him, can in some degree bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Every soul can learn to cultivate at least the spirit of ceaseless prayer. To render to no man evil for evil, to escape weariness in well-doing, to do all to the glory of God, to bear one another's burdens and fulfil Christ's law, to avoid entangling ourselves needlessly in the affairs of this life,—these efforts of saintliness are, by God's grace, possible to every soul. Every living man may be converted; every converted man may be saintly. For his spiritual children the Apostle's prayer was, "That I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."[2] For the unconverted world, so teeming, amidst its corruption, with the possibilities of even heroic saintliness,—"That I may save some of them.'

II.

From these several truths concerning the human soul we may deduce two Master-Principles which have uniformly guided the Church of God in the discharge of her missionary work.

First, the Church has always sought to make the great centres of human activity and life, the centres as of her jurisdiction and government, so of her chiefest missionary labours. In the Acts of the Apostles we find the Great Teacher of the Nations passing from one to another of those cities which were famous in the ancient world. Our historians and tourists follow in his steps, and we figure to ourselves, from written description, or pictured ruin, the objects which must have met his gaze, and, as we think, have riveted his interest. By nature and education he was alike fitted to appreciate the spirit and traditions of those generations, who had covered the lands through which he passed with the fair creations of

[1] Isa. xxxv. 1. [2] Col. i. 28.

their energy and their genius. But a higher interest had absorbed his soul, and he had no longer sympathies to lavish upon that which, however beautiful, was yet linked to the story of a perishing world. He came to Ephesus, but not drawn thither by the fame of its mighty temple; and to Philippi, but not that he might realise the site of a battle which had given a new direction to the history of the Roman Empire; and to Thessalonica, but not to gaze on the commerce and shipping which thronged its strand; and to Corinth, but attracted, neither by the beauty of its natural situation, nor by the fame of its ancient wealth. It was not her academic learning and refinement that lured him to Athens, nor did he seek Rome as the seat of Empire. In all these places, so various in interests, to which many a delicate and half-suppressed reference in his Epistles shows him to have been keenly alive, his object was simply, rigorously, one. He craved for souls; he lived in cities, not as the historian or archæologist might live in them, feeding on an evanescent past; not as seeking the society or wealth or literature of the day where it was best to be obtained; not as placing himself, with the administrative eye of a statesman, at the heart of society, whence he might purify the arteries of national life, as each stream ebbed forth from the capital, or flowed back from the distant provinces.

He sought for souls where souls were to be found thronged in a dense multitude. Therefore, long before he went thither, we hear him announce a chief design of his life, "I *must* also see Rome." His interest lay neither in the proud memorials of the Republic, nor in the more recent magnificence of the Empire. In the poorest quarter of the Augustan city, in streets never trodden by a patrician foot, in what was the St. Giles', or St. George's-in-the-East of Imperial Rome, we find the motive power

which constrained the heart of the Apostle. There, among outcast foreigners, who for the most part did not even speak the Latin language,[1] Jesus Christ had laid, by the labours of some unrecorded missionary, the foundations of the Western Church. There, among dark and miserable alleys, surrounded by crime of the most hideous and foul descriptions, the infant Church believed, hoped, and loved, wept, rejoiced, prayed, suffered. Thence must have ascended the frequent Offering of the Lord's Body. There were dispensed the benedictions and pardons of the Ascended Saviour. The Church was there, in the fulness, if not of her outward structure, yet at least of her inward life. How passionately does St. Paul recommend himself and his plans to the strong and prevailing intercessions of this body of Christians thus gathered from the teeming population of a corrupt metropolis! "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me"[2] "Your faith," writes the Apostle to that congregation of despised outcasts, "your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."[3] There thousands, whose names are forgotten on earth, but recorded in the book of life, nerved themselves by prayer for the persecutions and the catacombs of their coming history. Even in the palace of the Cæsar there were soon those who owned the Christians of the Suburra as their brethren. In every such centre of life as Rome a great door was opened; and there were many adversaries.[4] What more was wanted to solicit at once the love and the courage of the soldiery of our Crucified Redeemer? What more to determine the Missionary rule and practice of His Universal Church?

[1] Cf. the Greek names in Rom. xvi. Also Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 27, 28.

[2] Rom. xv. 30.

[3] Rom. i. 8.

[4] Said of Ephesus: 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

It was in the cities of the world that the Church encountered the most intense manifestations of evil. She did not leave these difficulties until she had secured easier conquests. She breasted the spirit of idolatry and sensuality where it was strongest. She conquered by suffering. Ten thousand martyrs were the price of her ascendency. And then a time came when error could only fully manifest itself in the country-districts, far from the frequent haunts of men, and its last upholders were termed "pagans" and "heathens," because the cities of the empire had hoisted the standard of the Cross. We, my brethren, have fallen upon days in which the country districts are indeed Christian, but in which also the great centres of human life, if the truth must be spoken—the scene of the Church's first victories—the cities of the world—or at least, vast multitudes who live in them, are wellnigh lost to the Kingdom of the Son of God. But the soul of man is not now less precious than of yore; and the Church's first duties are those which she owes to those great masses of the population among whom she made her home in the age of the Apostles. And this, not merely that she may quench the sparks of future revolution, or lighten the task of the civil magistrate, or diffuse a genial influence which is short of conversion, or relieve the temporal burdens of the poor. She does all this and more; but her aim, her motto is still, "That I may save some of them."

Secondly, although the Church thus throws herself upon the masses, she deals with each individual soul as if it alone were entitled to all her labour and all her love. Never, when the Church has comprehended her mission, has she affected to win souls by general measures which ignore the individual needs of each. The soul of man is not a mere part of a machine, which moves because you set the machine in motion. It is a living force, a centre of separate undying life. It is a combination of forces, each

of which may have to be encountered ere the soul be won. Each faculty is a force, each habit is a force, each prejudice is a force, each affection is a force. These forces must be separately recognised; they cannot be ignored. There is no short and easy method, no general measure which will enable you to dispense with an individualising love of each soul whose conversion you attempt. Proscribe and punish the profession of error or the language of vice: this does not win, it probably irritates the soul, which curses you, and submits. Sow tracts broadcast upon the waters of society: the dead letter cannot supersede the agency of the living spirit. Open your metropolitan cathedral on Sunday, and fill its aisles with multitudes who listen if they do not pray: it is well; but what if the seed lie upon the surface when there is none at hand to cover it with soil, and ere Monday morning comes the fowls of the air devour it?

He Who knew what was in man dealt continually with single souls. Mark His midnight conference with Nicodemus, and His searching conversation with the woman of Samaria, and His warning to the rich young man, and His separate ministries of mercy to Zacchæus, and the Magdalen, and the Dying Thief. For the time, you might suppose that the salvation of each one of those souls was the alone object of His Incarnation. In like manner St. Paul's was an individualising ministry. "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn *every one* night and day with tears."[1] Elsewhere he laboured, as at Ephesus, with souls, one by one. How much of his time is consumed in dealing, not with Churches, but with single souls! How is each epistle closed amid proofs of his love or anxiety for separate souls! The Epistle to Philemon is in the sacred canon; yet what is it but a letter to one soul, concerning the wellbeing of another, and that other, the soul of a slave?

[1] Acts xx. 31.

When a heap of pebbles is removed from one spot to another, you remove each pebble in that heap, without specially caring for each. When a flock of sheep is driven, each obeys the general impulse. But your souls, my brethren, have each upon them, in the possession of free will, a high mark of likeness to the Supreme Being. We may not deal with masses of men as with a flock of cattle or a heap of stones. Each soul must be made the object of special culture. No two souls, as no two faces, are exactly alike. No two spiritual histories exactly correspond. There are as many ways of effecting conversions as there are conversions to effect. Each penitent has his own fears, his own difficulties, his own dangers. Each faithful spirit must be built up in the Life of God, according to a law and measure, based on its own needs and opportunities. The Good Shepherd calleth His Sheep by name.[1] Individualising work is a matter not of taste but of necessity. A religion which does not attempt this may succeed in adding to the stores of the understanding; it can never win the heart. It may cover up the wounds of society; it can never bind and heal. It may soften men's manners, or at least tame their natural fierceness; it cannot teach love. It may do what is done by secular education; it may make men modest but not humble, patrons of religion but not children of the Church, respectable but not strictly conscientious, attentive to the outward proprieties, but not inwardly pure. It is one thing to influence a multitude; it is another and a greater to save a soul. And the Church thinks not of large results which have no value beyond the limits of time. Her aim is not to win the smiles of those whose highest object is the mere development of material wealth and the mere preservation of human society; but to add to

[1] St. John x. 3.

her store in Paradise, to snatch one by one from the gripe of the evil one spirits that hereafter may shine as jewels in the diadem of her Lord. We do not forget her high and permanent obligations towards those who already believe and obey as her children, and to whom an inheritance is given among them which are sanctified,[1] because for the moment we insist on the necessity which her belief in the preciousness of the soul has laid on her, to seek and to endeavour to save that which was lost.' "That I may save some of them."

What remains but that I should draw a conclusion, which you will already have anticipated? If the principles which I have attempted to state be true, the St. George's Mission[2] is doing its work, faithfully and effectually. Say if you will, that since its establishment in that unhappy neighbourhood the powers of ill have proclaimed their rule with a fierceness and urgency unknown before. Prove from your statistics that crime has as yet lost little or nothing of its frequency or its grossness. Have you proved the Mission to be a failure? I say confidently, No. It has not aimed beyond the mark of the Apostle. It has not attempted the mere civilisation of the many. It has attempted the actual *salvation* of *some*. And God, of His mercy, has blessed the effort, though amid rebuke and suffering. The Mission can point to better credentials of success than undertakings which are more ambitious and which are more favoured in high places, but are less true to those principles of the early Church which result from the revealed doctrine of the human soul. The St. George's clergy live in the centre of a dense population; they are always on the spot; they are there, ready to make the most of every opening, and to guard against each threaten-

[1] Acts xx. 32.

[2] The Church of St. Peter's, London Docks, is now the centre of this Mission.

ing of danger. They are surrounding themselves with services, schools, reformatories. They are winning penitents, and gathering in communicants. Their object is not merely to diffuse an influence, but, in the Name and by the strength of Christ, to save. Around them are those who *have been* saved—saved from lies, and prayerlessness, and lust, and despair, and hell. Such, of course, *may* fall away and be lost, as may any Christian on this side the grave. But as it is, God has "called them to this state of salvation" by the entreaties, and toils, and Sacraments of the St. George's Missionary Clergy. He will call others. By and by the little leaven will leaven the whole lump. Meanwhile, how do their clergy work? Not otherwise than the great Apostle, "warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."[1] It is an individualising work, conducted too in a neighbourhood where it is often difficult and painful to seek close contact with individual souls. It is a disinterested work. Its clergy may say to its people, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"[2] They can hope for nothing but souls. For wealth? They covet no man's silver or gold or apparel;[3] they take of your alms this night only what is needed to sustain life. For comfort? You know the history of the past year;[4] "after being shamefully entreated they are still bold in our God to preach the gospel of God with much contention."[5] For professional advancement? To these, we may surely say, "promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, from the north or from the south." The mitres and dignities of the Church are indeed bestowed else-

[1] Col. i. 28. [2] 1 Thess. ii. 19. [3] Acts xx. 33.
[4] There had been serious opposition to the Mission, and open rioting during the previous year. [5] 1 Thess. ii. 2.

where; but Christ's toiling servants do not therefore lose their reward. Even in this world there are joys for the self-denying labourer in Christ's vineyard, of which the world little dreams. It is a joy to pronounce the Holy Name of Jesus where That Name is unknown or unloved: to assert Its power: to unfold Its treasures of hidden love. It is a joy to protest against man's pride in the Name of Christ's Humility: against man's covetousness in the Name of Christ's holy Poverty: against man's self-indulgence in the Name of Christ's Mortification: against man's sensuality in the Name of Christ's awful Purity: against man's hard unmercifulness in the Name of Christ's fathomless Love. They make this protest daily and hourly. As they have been allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so they speak, not as pleasing men, but God Which trieth the hearts.[1] And if at times "the waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly," threatening alike their work and their persons with that violence which shed such joy and glory over Christ's first messengers, "the Lord Who dwelleth on high is mightier,"[2] they know full well, than the error or the malice of His sinful creatures. "Thou shalt stretch forth Thine Hand upon the furiousness of mine enemies, and Thy right Hand shall save me."[3]

It is sometimes urged as an objection to contributions for missionary purposes, that we who live at home cannot say what is really done with money subscribed for a professedly distant object. It passes through so many hands before it reaches its destination. We lose sight of it as it glides from one to another: that it does its intended work at last may be told us hereafter, but for the present is a matter of faith. The necessary act of confidence in the conduct of the Foreign Missions of the Church is, I may observe, a simple duty; but support St. George's Mission,

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 4. [2] Ps. xciii. 5. [3] Ps. cxxxviii. 7.

and no such act of confidence is required at your hands. You may go and see for your own selves what is doing at the East end of London. You may see in and around the Mission the outward sign of an inward grace; the visible machinery and the moral results which attest the progress of a supernatural work. Constant services, frequent administrations of the Sacraments, instruction in Christian Doctrine, side by side with provision of various kinds for the bodily necessities of the suffering poor, and for the recovery of those who yearn for freedom from the thraldom of sin,—these and suchlike provisions of mercy will meet your inquiries. You may converse with Christian men and women who will tell you, with tears of joy, that to St. George's Mission they owe light and blithesome hearts in this world, and bright hopes of that blessed world which lies beyond the grave and gate of death. Whether other like missions are to be planted, as they are urgently needed, elsewhere, must depend in no slight degree upon the confidence—no, not mere confidence, but rather upon the deserved, and generous, and enthusiastic support extended towards this Mission of St. George's in the East by faithful members of the English Church. In this country, abounding in wealth and luxury, there is no serious difficulty to be overcome when material improvements, which minister to the safety and convenience of the public, claim the necessary capital at the hands of Englishmen. Shall the Church of our Redeemer alone complain that when she pleads in His Name for souls which He has purchased with His Blood there is none that answereth? Shall she sit weak and forlorn upon the earth, with feeble hands and broken downcast mien, because around her souls are perishing hour by hour, and no man layeth it to heart? Shall the Lazarus of Eastern London lie ever unheeded and uncared for at the gate of the Western Dives? Say not, dear brethren, that your judgment is unconvinced as

to the duty of supporting this Mission, unless indeed you cannot keep pace with Christ and His Church in their high estimate of the soul of man. Inquire, rather, whether the possible sluggishness of the judgment to recognise a duty be not the product of a deeper disinclination of the will to discharge it. "Stir up," O my Redeemer, in this matter so dear to Thy Heart, "the wills of Thy faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded."

SERMON III.

ACTIVE LOVE A CRITERION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.[1]

1 St. John iii. 14.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

ST. JOHN is in a peculiar sense the geographer of the spiritual world; and his First Epistle is our chart or handbook of the Life of God in the human soul. With such a guide it is not difficult for even the least practised traveller to find his way; since the Apostle gives the fullest and most particular description of that beautiful district, so rich in all that moves our interest and our wonder. His is no colourless outline, but a picture wherein hill and valley, light and shade, desert and garden, are each portrayed. The richest pastures, the highest elevations of this marvellous region, its points of contact with and points of unlikeness to the life of Nature, its products and its resources, its outward and fugitive characteristics of surface, and its deep inner unchanging laws, whether of growth or of decay, are here in succession brought before us. There is no mistaking the more prominent features; they stand out in statements so unlike aught else in human speech, except the very words of our Lord Himself, that for a moment we know not whether

[1] Preached in the Church of St. James, Piccadilly, London (on behalf of the Church Penitentiary Association), on Thursday, May 15, 1862.

most to marvel at the simplicity of the language which conveys them, or at the greatness and depth of the truth which it conveys. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves;" "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar;" "All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father;" "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself;" "Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God;" "He that loveth not, knoweth not God;" "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

Each truth, taken apart from its context, seems perfect and complete in itself. Each truth, when first encountered, meets us, as if, filled with life, it sparkled in the light like a precious stone, that the soul's eye may seek to discover its hidden meaning.[1] Each is presented to us without limitations, without toning down or shading off, without balance of truth against truth, without the conditions which we know must affect our final estimate. As we gaze, each seems gradually to rise before us, like a mountain peak, bold and clear against the sky of heaven, for the time narrowing up the horizon of the soul and occupying its whole field of vision; that, contemplating with undistracted sight the force and beauty of each separate truth, the soul may yield itself to each, first to one, and then to another, and may thus be successively fascinated, possessed, transfigured, changed by each from glory to glory.

This character of teaching—always most forcible—is especially needful for those who are recent converts to the faith of Christ. To them the lines which separate truth and falsehood, sin and holiness, are not as yet so clear that the sight of these bold and prominent landmarks can be dis-

[1] Ebrard, Johannisbriefe Einl. p. 46.

pensed with. Such persons are still, to a great extent, feeling their way. That which may be a platitude or an axiom to others, has for them all the welcome freshness of a newly-discovered and original truth. Writing for such as these, who sit on the lower forms in the school of our Blessed Saviour, the Apostle of Love makes himself at once understood by them; while yet his words, that seem so simple, reveal an unfathomable depth of truth to those who have known our Lord best and longest. In mapping out the New Life for beginners, he does not forget the needs of the most advanced. The New Life, which our Lord has by His Spirit shed upon the Church, is in this Epistle drawn out from the recesses of the soul into the public highway of human language. Here we note the essence of this life—communion with the Father and His Blessed Son. Here we see its ideal—nothing less than perfection in the ways of God. Here we study its calm yet firm grasp of revealed dogma, its sense of remaining inner sin, yet of abounding light, streaming from the Unction of the Holy One, its profound opposition to the spirit and maxims of corrupt human society, which is called the "world." Here, above all, we are taught to understand that which is, in some respects, its most characteristic feature, and the certain secret of its attractive power over the hearts of men. The "love of the brethren" is unfolded to us as being the shadow of that Heavenly Love which shone in its brightest splendour upon the Cross.

I.

The text, then, is addressed to a state of mind in which there is still more or less of anxiety as to whether the soul has indeed and really passed, at its conversion, from the sphere of death to the sphere of life. It cannot be difficult for many here to enter with at least some

sympathy into that very distressing yet not uncommon trial of the soul. We know how, when a great joy or a great sorrow comes upon us, all seems at first unreal and phantom-like. In its rapture or its agony the soul loses its hold even of the everyday certainties of feeling and experience. Life seems for the time a dream, and, like night-sentinels, we challenge each duty and each friend to answer to their names and purposes. This passing sense of insecurity is more common in the life of grace than in that of nature, because the former is more entirely removed from the visible things to which our weakness clings than the latter. And so here we have a doubt, produced by the very greatness of the gift of Life, whether Life has been given after all. The vision seems too blessed to be more than a vision—too glorious to be literally true. Is there any one symptom or fact upon which the mind can fall back as upon a decisive proof that all is not a dream? Can we be convinced that the change is as real and the gift as certain as the promise of God is sure, and that that encompassing presence of doubt and shadow is itself a transient and untrustworthy illusion? Can we know that we are standing on the firm ground of the Land of Life, and that the sun is shining on us from its glorious Heaven?

Now, it is to this condition of soul, thus craving for a criterion of true Life, that St. John incidentally addresses himself. "We know," he says, "that we have passed from death unto life." And how? Before we consider his decision more narrowly, observe what it is that he does *not* say. He says not, "Because we have been baptized." Not that he doubted the regenerating efficacy of the Sacrament which he had himself traced up to its fountain-head in the Riven Side of the Crucified,[1] but because he knew that it is one thing to have been called into a state of salva-

[1] 1 St. John v. 6; St. John xix. 34.

tion, and another to have persevered in it. Nor, again, "Because we have an assurance that we live." Not that he would question the inner supernatural consolations which God might bestow upon favoured souls, but because, besides cutting off all hope for those who did not share in this rare and precarious experience, he might by such a test have encouraged the easy confidence of a dull and torpid conscience, or even of a particular physical temperament. Nor yet does he say, "Because God has strewn our path with temporal blessings." The sun shone and the rain fell as well upon the persecuting empire as upon the persecuted Church. If temporal prosperity is the blessing of the Older Dispensation, adversity, it has been remarked, is rather the blessing of the New; and the Apostle would hardly put forward a criterion which would deny their spiritual vitality to the Martyrs in their agony, while attributing it to the Pagans who shed their blood. Least of all does he say, "Because we have made a great intellectual progress, because we have advanced in speculation, and adopted new modes of thought, and exploded many antiquated traditions of our forefathers." Certainly Christianity, as a revelation, was an advance on Judaism; but to regard God's gift of a higher knowledge as a sort of intellectual decoration, which of itself was a test of life, would have been to forget that there is a knowledge of truth in hell, and to encourage a tone of self-assertion which is as remote as possible from the true temper of the Gospel. No; St. John points to a deeper test. The grace of Sacraments may be forfeited; the sense of assurance, a delusion; a worldly prosperity may be the seal of reprobation; and intellectual progress may go hand in hand with the deepest spiritual degradation. But there is a test of life which points as a rule to a Sacramental origin, and which warrants a humble assurance of God's favour, and which can use or dispense with temporal wellbeing, and

which encourages an even deeper knowledge of that Truth which is its Object. My brethren, that test is Love.

II.

Human life, wherever unrenewed by our Lord's blessing and doctrine, has been consistently marked by the manifested presence of unchecked selfishness. Whether coarse and brutal, or polished and refined, selfishness is the moral attitude of unchristianised man. The society of the old Roman Empire, rising from the base of its vast slave population to its apex in the Cæsar, was a vast hierarchy of selfishness, in which class preyed on class, and man on man. And what, let us ask, is selfishness? It is refracted love. It is that perversion of love which fixes it on a false object—viz. self. God has endowed every human being with a fund of love; and you will find no heart so brutal or so hard as not to retain, in some depth or corner, some portion of this original endowment. God gave to man this love, that by it man might seek Himself Who gave it; it was to be the moral law of an attraction, whereby the human soul should move around, while gravitating towards its Centre. Certainly the selfish man loves; but in his case the ray of love, instead of darting upwards from the heart to embrace its One Rightful Object, and then at His bidding to shed its blessed tenderness upon a fellow-creature, is at once, by a perverse and miserable deflection, bent backwards upon its source. Thus the selfish man becomes, through this refraction of his love, his own centre, his own end—it is an awful thought—his own God.[1] His life is not necessarily inactive; but his activity is simply the measure of his love of self. All that play of thought and feeling, all that energy and passion of movement, all that incessant and exacting routine of public labours and of private duties, all turns

[1] Phil. iii. 19, where St. Paul applies this moral doctrine to gluttony.

out, upon ultimate analysis, to be nothing higher than a lifelong, processional worship, which the man offers to the divinity of self. It may be that he will even admit this to be so. He has erected his own miserable experience into a theory. He will tell you that he has seen a great deal of life, and that he does not believe in the existence of a really unselfish or disinterested character. His doctrine is broadly this—that every man has his price if you can succeed in discovering it; and that the only real difference is that which lies between those who acknowledge the empire of self over the conduct of human life on the one hand, and those who vainly endeavour to disguise it, whether from themselves or from mankind at large on the other.

Yet, let us recognise the truth—selfishness is death. Not always social death: a selfish man may suceeed in pushing his way in the world. Not always political death: a selfish policy may, at least temporarily, win for a people wealth or power, or some form of merely material greatness. But moral death;—ay, always and everywhere. For in the moral world love is analogous to those mighty forces in nature whereby planets are kept true to the orbit in which they move around their central suns. If this regulating love be diverted from its true object—if the planet aspires to become its own sun—what can ensue but disaster and ruin? And yet a selfish life, however full of annoyance and distress to others, is most ruinous, after all, to the man who lives it. One by one the tendrils which the character would throw out around other lives are withered and killed; one by one the finer sensibilities of the soul are deadened; one by one the symptoms of the moral life become fainter and less distinct. In time, love, centring more and more intensely upon self, loses the proper character of love, and dies outright. The heart of the moral life has ceased to beat; the senses of

the soul no longer feel; the selfish man is a moral corpse. Living in a world of suffering, he is blind to the wounds and deaf to the entreaties of his fellow-men; they crave sympathy, and he is dumb; they implore relief, and he is motionless. Ay, he infects the very air of society around him; the contagion of his example spreads like a pestilence; and the moral constitution must be strong in holiness and love to resist the infection of that noisome atmosphere which he has generated, and which hangs heavily around him. "But then he is a man of letters?" It may be, "influential and stirring?" Possibly. "So refined, so accomplished, so religious?" Brethren, I really cannot help it. St. John has already described his *real* condition: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Mark that—"abideth." It is a state of moral death, which lasts. The selfish activity of his natural life is but a foil which shows forth more plainly the abiding death of his spirit. His powers of business, of discussion, of administration, of criticism, stand in ghastly contrast with the absence of true, self-forgetting sympathy for any single human being. It is not a trance that we witness; it is not epilepsy or paralysis; it is the grave. Dark is that soul in which God's light shines not; cold, in which God's love burns not; corrupt, for already the worms of self-indulgence and conceit, and envy and disappointment, are gnawing out the cold and fetid heart, which has preceded the body that encases it in its passage to the tomb.

Speaking for the God of Love, I might well be expected to bear no malice or hatred in my breast. Yet I am constrained to confess to you, brethren, that I do hate selfishness. Not selfish men; God forbid, they are my brothers; but selfishness, that plague-spot of human life—that parent of its errors and its misery. Surely it is hateful when we look hard at it. Hateful when incarnate in an opinion, a mere human speculation, which yet dares to say to the

consciences of men, Believe me: I am the Truth. Hateful when seated upon a throne and crowned, not to rule for the good of the many, but to cry to the peoples, I am Power; obey me. Hateful when its mouthpiece is a demagogue, who seems to say to a deluded populace, Claim your rights, but who in truth whispers, Carry me to power. But never so intensely hateful as when, crouching behind a lustful passion, reckless of shame and cost, it mutters aloud, Gratify me. And we are on this occasion led inevitably to reflect on this the most odious and repulsive of all the known forms of selfishness. Nowhere, you will observe, are the ravages of selfishness so dreadful as in the sphere which is traversed by the Church Penitentiary Asssociation on its blessed errand of mercy. Nowhere else is self worshipped with sacrifices of such price and beauty. Here, like another Moloch, it is appeased by the agony of human victims; here its altars are indeed reddened with human gore. Elsewhere it may content itself with wealth, or incense, or supremacy, or pleasure; here it must have the bodies and the souls of women and of men. It feeds upon the bloom and health and life-strength of its victim's body, after contemptuously snatching and casting to the winds the peace and joy and conscience and salvation of that victim's soul. What, I would ask, is this selfishness of sensuality, when really reigning in a man, but the very abomination of desolation in the temple of God? What is this stamp of moral and physical degradation, which proclaims the reign of sensualised self, but the genuine mark of the Beast?

III.

Let us turn to St. John's account of the symptom by which we Christians may know that we have passed from death unto life. The Alpine climber, who has no instrument at hand by which to ascertain his exact elevation,

yet can observe that the vegetation has altered its character, or that it is disappearing, or that the air he breathes is sensibly more rare and more exhilarating, or that the line of snow is just above him. The traveller who crosses by night the frontier which divides two empires, unable to detect the exact line of the boundary, yet can note the change of language, the change of uniform, the altered character of the general culture, and deportment, and civilisation of the people. The moral world, too, has its indistinct frontier lines, and yet also its broad distinctions, which prove that the frontiers are real. How, then, can we know that we are on the mountain-side with our Heavenly Guide, high above the mists of the vale of selfishness? How can we be sure that the spiritual frontier has been really passed, which separates the Kingdom of the Living from the Realm of Death? St. John replies, Because we love the brethren. Spiritual privileges, a confident temper, worldly prosperity, or intellectual movement, do not prove what *is* proved by the presence of love. For "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."[1] When we feel our heart beat with these divine pulsations of a Higher Life, we know that we have passed the Rubicon, and that we are in our True Country. For beyond the frontier of the Kingdom of the Incarnation there is no such thing as this New Love of the brethren. There is much that seems like it, although in truth profoundly distinct. There is the love of relations, friends, and country; the love of those whom we benefit or who do us good; the love which is secure of its return, whether of service or affection. But this love of those whom we like, or who like us, is obviously, and from the nature of the case, a narrow love. It is always bounded, and you need not travel far to discover its range. It follows in the wake of a family

[1] 1 St. John iv. 16.

influence, or of a national flag, or of the traditions of a school, or of a political party, or of a philosophical system. Moreover, on a closer examination, it turns out to be only a disguised form of the love of self. The truth must be spoken: in a state of nature man does not love his fellow-man. The civilised man does not love the savage, nor the savage the civilised man, nor the civilised man the man who is equally civilised with himself. Contempt, fear, and rivalry are the natural relations of fallen man with his brother man; and they are incompatible with love. Nature does not teach the rich to love the poor, nor the high-born to love the lower orders, nor the intelligent to love the stupid, nor the respectable to love those who have lost their character. If natural men help each other, it is from a motive of fear or of interest, or, at best, of duty —but with a secret repulsion that forbids the growth of love. In the natural order of life, man fears, suspects envies, despises, contemns his brother: he does not love him. Human life is made up of a tissue of personal feuds, of family quarrels, of class hatreds, of professional hatreds, of national hatreds; and these are carefully hoarded up and decked out by those who write human history as being forsooth its time-honoured traditions, and then they are passed on as heirlooms from generation to generation. Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour came down from heaven that He might banish from the hearth of the human family its old antipathies, and introduce the reign of good-will amongst men. "A new commandment," He said to His generation—"a new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."[1] New as it was, that commandment was obeyed. Jesus Christ shone in His perfection upon the human heart, and, like the closed bud, it opened at the bidding of the shining sun. In loving our Blessed Saviour, men were trained to the love of God; in learning

[1] St. John xiii. 34.

to love the Unseen and Incomprehensible God, the heart opened sufficiently to love the human brotherhood. To the Christian, every human being became an object of interest and of affection. The love of the Christian was to follow in the track of the Love which had created and redeemed the world. Had not God made each separate human life? Had not Jesus Christ died for each separate human life? Then surely each human life must be full of dignity and of mystery. Just as the botanist finds interest in that which to others is but as a worthless weed, so, beneath the shadow of the Cross, the Christian sees in every human being a mind that *can* know the Very and Eternal Truth—a heart that *can* make answer to the Heart of God—a vast unexplored inner world of thought, feeling, resolve, desire, hope, grief, anguish, passion. To the Christian every separate life is seen to be no mere specimen of a class: for has it not its own special work? does it not, like a meteor across the heavens, pursue its own path in time—a path which none other can share—a path which has its own length, its own brightness, its own darkness, its own end? Is not every living man in one of two states, and has he not one of two eternal destinies before him, and is there not some one special work which he alone was meant to do? Who can refuse interest to human life, when in the school of Jesus Christ he has learnt its value? And yet this interest may be merely speculative; it is not necessarily love. But then, in every soul the Christian beholds the image of the Great Object of his true affection; every soul speaks to him of the handiwork of the Creator, and of the Tears and Blood of the Redeemer, and of the Toil and Breath of the Sanctifier. The love of God lavished in profusion upon the unthankful and the evil obliges the Christian not merely to love his Christian brother, but to love his brother man as man. It was wonderful, that first awaken-

ing of this perception in the human heart, at our Blessed Saviour's bidding. That primitive love had all the charm of a newly-discovered accomplishment, unknown to previous generations; and it was practised by the missionaries and martyrs of early Christendom as if with the buoyant delight that is moved by recent discovery. It was like a new sense developed from within, opening indeed upon familiar objects, but perceiving in them a revelation of unsuspected beauty; it had all that keenness of appetite and fresh vigour of appreciation which no impaired health or spirits had as yet blunted or enfeebled. Here was a heaven-sent faculty, capable of breasting the devastating forces of selfishness, and of renewing the face of the earth. Human thought had dared to dream of a love that should be absolutely *humanitarian*—that should be bounded only by the limits of the race: and, lo! Christ our Lord had realised it!

IV.

We need not to linger on this attractive topic, for again and again the world has done homage to this feature of our Lord's work. It has admired the largeness, the disinterestedness, the tenderness, the depth, the gracefulness of the love which He has shed on human hearts. It has even acknowledged in this love a power which might regenerate society—a panacea for its own manifold woes. And it has gone on to ask: "Cannot we, too, cultivate this love, apart from that belief which accompanies it in the Church? Cannot we utilise it in our camps and hospitals? cannot we make it the stay and the embellishment of our human life, without at the same time accepting that system of dogma, that high moral ideal, that priesthood, those historical Scriptures and those mystical Sacraments? Surely," it has proceeded to insinuate, "these things are but the outer husk and form, while love is the imperishable spirit and life; we will sever the spirit from the letter, the

essence from the accidents; creeds and doctrines have done their work; they belong to past ages, when thought was fixed and inquiry impossible; but love shall remain among us when these are gone, as at least one legacy of the Christ, to make life brighter and death less full of gloom than nature has made them."

To this proposal to sever the gift of love from the gift of truth, the Church of God has ever said, and will say unto the end, "It is impossible." "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." It were just as reasonable for the sick man to hope that he might enjoy the blessing of sound health while yet he persisted in declining to be regular in exercise, and moderate in diet, and observant of those laws which regulate the healthful development of the body. There is a fundamental error abroad as to the connection that exists between this repudiated Doctrine and that welcomed Love. They are not thrown together by an accident; the creed is not the shell or clothing of a moral life within it; on the contrary, we *must* say to our latitudinarian critics, "That love which you admire is the direct result of that creed which you condemn. We Christians love, because we believe; our belief is the motive and the measure of our love. Because we believe in the Incarnation of God, descending from His throne, out of pure love, to the lowliness of Bethlehem and to the ignominy and anguish of Calvary—therefore there arises in our hearts a responsive love, evoked by His transcendent charity. We love Him because He first loved us. Because He bade us love one another *as* He had loved us, therefore ours may be no narrow love. He died for us and for all poor sinners, that we might embalm the memory of His precious death in a love which shrinks not from opening its arms to all for whom He died. This self-sacrifice, the social fruits of which you covet, is the true, the highest expression of our love to Him Whom our

creed reveals to us. "As He laid down His life for us, we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."[1]

"The brethren." Who are they? Are they fellow-Christians—our peers or our superiors in the sympathies and graces of the divine life? If so, where is the parallel between this love of ours for equals or superiors, and that love of His? Did He, then, reserve His love for a race of beings who were worthy of it, and who would at once return it? Did He not rather love us in our sins, in our perverseness, in our folly; did He not love us in spite of our being what we were, that we might reflect something of this His love upon those who are less indebted than we to His mercy and His lovingkindness? The "brethren" of this Epistle are the whole human family; because the love of the Christian is to be as the love of Christ—world-embracing, and regardless of acknowledgment and return.[2] Too often, we His followers love those who give something back—sympathy of spirit, or bright example, or consolation, or assistance—and we only *patronise* the poor, and the ignorant, and the heathen; we do not profess to *love* them. But "God commendeth His love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,"[3] and we are to "know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."

V.

In this way we are enabled to grasp a great law of the Christian life. It is this. The wider the moral and spiritual interval between the heart which loves and the object of its affection, the nearer does this human love approach to the standard of Mount Calvary.

We may not undervalue the love of friend for friend,

[1] 1 St. John iii. 16; iv. 19.

[2] This point is well developed by Ebrard, Die Briefe Johannis, p. 262. sqq.

[3] Rom. v. 8.

of brother for brother in Christ. This love is an earthly shadow of the Love of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity for Each Other in heaven. It is a fulfilment in measure of that divine intercession, "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."[1] But more like to that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge" is the love which fastens on an ungrateful, repulsive object—an object that invites no sympathies, and that proffers no recompense. Such love is Christ-like in proportion to the absence of anything that would naturally provoke it. It carries our thoughts up towards the Great Sacrifice; the Spirit of Jesus, we feel, lives in His members. Certainly no interval that may exist between the most true-hearted saint and the most reckless sinner can compare with the abyss that assuredly severs the least sinful of His creatures from the Sinless Christ. Certainly no eye of man bending in tender love from an elevation of peace and purity over a fellow-creature imbruted by the most degrading sin, can for a moment represent to us that last gaze which the Great Victim for human errors cast from His Cross—I will not say upon the blaspheming multitude, but—on the loved and saintly forms beneath Him. No human ministry can, like His, be expiatory and redemptive; no mere man can deliver his brother, or make agreement unto God for him; none, save One, can atone, although we may plead and administer a finished Atonement. But whenever the object of love is most perfectly removed from the character and sympathies of the soul which loves, there the approach to our Holy Lord is nearest. The Church abounds in shadows, more or less clear in outline, of That Love Which redeemed her. The parent, loving perseveringly an ungrateful son; the teacher, devoting himself to scholars who see in his sacrifice of time and strength only an interference with their

[1] St. John xvii. 21.

liberty; the landlord, who spends capital, thought, energy, for a tenantry that will not do justice to his intentions; the statesman, who legislates for the ultimate good of a people to the ruin of his present popularity; the missionary, who carries the greatest of all blessings to a Pagan tribe, that will presently put him to a cruel death for doing so,—all of them, in very different degrees, carry the principle of the Redemption into human life. But if you press me to point out to you the one form of love which at the present day most powerfully recalls to me the Good Shepherd seeking His lost ones, I am constrained to point to the Sister of Mercy, so ennobled by her love of the degraded and fallen woman whom she tends, for Christ's sake, in a penitentiary. The parent, the teacher, even the missionary, have motives to exertion which are denied to the Sister of Mercy; in the penitentiary you have the greatest interval between ministering love and its object, and therefore in the penitentiary the moral triumph seems most complete. For, on the one hand, there is education, refinement, a sensitive modesty, a fearless purity, a combination of all that makes a woman's character most beautiful and attractive, consecrated by the piety which has freely given a life to this uninviting service. On the other, love, reverence, modesty, faith, religion, character, intelligence, all have perished; and there remains only an emasculate will, a corrupt imagination, a memory that is yet a charnel-house of evil, an expression that witnesses to the despotism of lust, a worn and haggard form which bespeaks the autumn of life, and which seems to tell of years that have never been lived. You must descend to that lower region of animalised life to understand the misery of its unspeakable humiliation—to estimate the hardness, the coarseness, the cruelty, the disgust at all that leads up to or that reflects God—the recklessness, the self-assertion, the immodesty, the want of principle and the

want of heart, the absence of all that elevates, the presence of all that degrades and repels, in the victims of sin. Vast is the love which spans that chasm; it is the vastness of the love which ensures its success. Here, if anywhere, is the knowledge of having passed from death to life warranted. No transient, feeble sentiment could endure that inevitable toil—could bear up against those crushing disappointments—could enwrap as with a wreath of fire that earthly being whom sensuality has defiled, and whom love must purify.

VI.

And this leads us to observe incidentally the powerlessness of society to deal with this gigantic evil. Society confesses herself unequal to the task. She protests, she deplores, she condemns; but she does not command the moral resources which are necessary if she is to grapple with her enemy. Society can only banish the sinner who has outraged her conventionalisms. And the banished sinner sinks as they sink who are drowned, not in free water, but beneath the ice of winter. After the first descent, the sinner instinctively rises; but it is to discover that everywhere the surface is coated by a barrier—hard, impenetrable, merciless—which denies to her a return to the upper atmosphere. The iron has entered into her soul; she has no choice. She must sink again. Think you not, brethren, that those daughters of shame, when, at the intervals of their delirium, they would fain return to the purity and peace of former years, and when they find all the avenues of pure life blockaded against them with a jealous vigilance which nothing can escape—think you not that they scorn, with a sharp, joyless laugh, the claim of that society which condemns them, to bear the name of Him Whom they have themselves openly rejected? Ay, depend upon it, as they scan the social life from which

they are excluded; as they sullenly watch it while it contemptuously ignores them in that highway or the public assembly; as they review with a sinister and bitter sneer its respectable economy or its wasteful magnificence, they ask themselves if it has aught to do with One Who sat on the curbstone of the well during the weary hours of an Eastern day, pleading with the Samaritan woman for her soul—Who absolved the adulteress taken in the very act of sin—Who undertook the cause of the penitent Magdalen against the self-righteousness of the Pharisee.

Are we, then, to make it a charge against society that she thus banishes the fallen woman from her precincts? Certainly not. Society cannot do otherwise. She may not trifle with those fundamental laws upon an adherence to which her very existence is based. Society is an expansion of the life of the family, and that crime which is destructive of the pure family life is ultimately, and no less certainly subversive of the social fabric. In a Christian society our Lord has shed a peculiar blessing upon the family, as the foundation-stone of organised human life; His authority is represented by the father, His love by the mother, His obedience by the child; and to weaken this consecrated foundation is to endanger the pile which rests upon it. Destroy the family, and you sap our Christian civilisation and the greatness and happiness of our country. Better far that society should seem hard and merciless than that she should patronise vice, only because it happens to affect an outward guise which does not ordinarily belong to it, and endeavours to veil its inherent grossness beneath an exterior of conventional refinement. Pardon me, my brethren, if I make allusion to reports which may well fill the mind of a thoughtful Christian with dark forebodings for the future of our country; but it is said that, at least in this metropolis, society has of late seemed to condone

that which is treason against her very existence, by breaking down the sacred and exclusive barrier which fences in the pure family life on which she is based. This is a leniency which imperils the innocent without saving the sinful. This is not an absolution from sin; it is a co-partnership with guilt. No. Let society mark well her bulwarks and set up her houses. Let her at least be true to the instinct of self-preservation. It is one thing to treat the sinner as the Pharisee treated her; it is another to tell sin that it is innocence. Certainly society cannot emulate those supernatural efforts which the Church puts forth for the recovery of the lost; but this is no reason for making a compact with sin, since such a compact would involve no less than a social return to barbarism—nothing less than the gratuitous defilement and ruin of multitudes of souls.

VII.

But this consideration of the powerlessness of society in the matter must convince us that whoever would deal with it successfully must bring to the work that which society lacks—a high type of organised religious life. Such a life not only can act with certain effect upon the fallen by means of the prodigal self-sacrifice which it fosters and embodies, but it is also a protection against that corruption which might elsewhere ensue from such intimate contact with the impure. Such a life is emphatically a creation of the Church. A past generation endeavoured to restore the victims of sin by a less costly effort than the modern penitentiary. The programme is simple; it involved—first, a subscription list; then, a site; next, some kind of fortified building; after that, a paid resident matron, and the occasional services of a chaplain. The aim of so feeble a type of institution could hardly reach beyond the restoration of an external respectability. We, brethren, labouring through

the agencies of this Association, content ourselves with nothing less than the salvation of perishing souls as the object of our efforts. And because we understand the dignity, and resource, and mystery that belong to every soul, therefore we do not expect to compass by a mere machinery results which call for the exercise of the most discerning penetration, and the warmest affection, and the most intrepid and persevering will that is discoverable in the Church. To restore principle where the sense of fixed truth has perished outright; to unfold a heart which has long closed against all the finer human sympathies; to teach obedience, and submission, and consistency of purpose, and reverence for truth and goodness, and purity of act and word and thought;—this is no light labour for those who can do it best. It demands an incessant effort; and such an effort will fail if it be only a perpetual and conscious repetition of acts; if it be anything less than an instinct; if it proceed not from a wellspring of love, ever gushing up freely from the depths of the heart. And you must feed that love by a life which perpetually directs it upon its Great Object. This is the meaning of the constant Communions and Services, of the Meditations and Retreats, of the religious atmosphere and devotional accompaniments of the Sisterhood. It is a shallow appreciation which would view these things as a concession to a taste which you consent to gratify in consideration of the work done. On the contrary, these features are the mainspring of the whole. In her sphere each sister is "a prophet of the Highest, going before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto His people for the remission of their sins." Fresh from the Divine Presence, she reflects unconsciously upon the degraded soul something of God's justice, of His purity, of His mercy, of His love; she proclaims by her very temper and bearing that "the Dayspring from on

high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace." It is from these precious channels of communion with the Source of Life that her vigour is drawn; it is because she lives above the world and apart from it, in the tabernacle of her God, that her hand is ever so ready, and her smile so bright and so joyous, and her influence so wellnigh omnipotent in that realm of death.

I venture, then, brethren, to recommend this Association very earnestly to your continued support. It may at least plead the number of souls which it has actually helped to save from a dreadful end. Nor should we forget how healthy is the influence which, by its mere existence, such an Association exercises upon the national thought. No one can have observed the laws which regulate the formation of opinion without remarking how receptive are most of the streamlets that swell the great flood of public thought, and how generally they take colour and direction, not from the inner reasons of things, but from the verdict which is implied in the existence of facts and institutions around them. To many persons, who are, from whatever circumstances, unable to fall back upon a deeper conviction, the existence of this Association is of itself a condemnation of impurity. It is a means of bringing before their minds the ghastly evils of unchecked sensuality, and the sentiment with which it is regarded by thoughtful Christians.[1] But, further, such an Association is a fresh call to the highest purity in all those who are led to support it. St. Paul's rebuke to the Pharisee, "Thou that sayest

[1] Of late years, legislation on the questions of divorce and marriage, and other causes, have contributed to weaken the strength and purity of national opinion (as distinct from religious belief) on this class of subjects, and to make it desirable that nothing should be neglected which can keep the broad principles of the law of God clear and plain before the conscience and intellect of England.

a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?"[1] must nerve us, my Christian brethren, to the culture of a purity of thought and spirit such as the Gospel indeed contemplates. In aiding this work of mercy, we shall find that our English sense of honour, our mere natural hatred of hypocrisy, comes to the support of our loyalty and devotion to the lofty teaching of our Lord and Saviour. More might be said on these and kindred topics; but I content myself with falling back on that aspect of our Association which the text has suggested. This work embodies the noble and generous idea of rolling back the mighty tide of selfishness by the unconquerable strength of love. While fostering and marshalling the activities of love for the restoration of the fallen, this Association develops before Christendom and mankind one of the highest evidences of our corporate and Christian life. The cause of Penitentiaries, I am persuaded, may be left with perfect confidence in your hands. Support it, that you may be fellow-helpers to the Truth of God by showing how that Truth, and It alone, can still the strongest passions that enslave the soul. Support it by sacrifices that cost you something which you will really miss, that you, too, may experience that delicious sense, not of merit, but of moral elasticity and expansion, which ever attends upon a truly self-sacrificing deed—that you, too, may know what it is to have passed from the death of selfishness to the life of love.

[1] Rom. ii. 22.

SERMON IV.

PROFIT AND LOSS.[1]

ST. MATT. xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

OUR Lord had been foretelling His approaching sufferings; and St. Peter had ventured to take hold[2] of His arm, or garment, to draw Him aside, and, in St. Matthew's words, to "rebuke" Him. "Have compassion on Thyself, Lord:[3] this shall not so be unto Thee." Turning Himself round so that all might hear, our Lord met this rebuke with a sharp and, as it might seem, a severe anathema, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me." Beneath the thoughtless affectionateness of a warm-hearted friend, the eye of the Redeemer of the world detects a snare of the great adversary. Jesus is again wrestling not merely with the promptings of flesh and blood, but with the subtlety and strength of principalities and powers. For our divine Lord, as being withal truly and intensely human, was throughout His life conscious of an inner shrinking from that baptism of death which, as He knew, was in the end awaiting Him. The mental sufferings of Jesus reached a climax in Gethsemane; they did not begin there. But here was His own warm-hearted but unreflecting Apostle doing unwittingly the very Tempter's work; appealing to the sensitiveness of Christ's

1 Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral (at the Special Evening Service), on the Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 22, 1865.

2 St. Matt. xvi. 22, προσλαβόμενος.

3 Ἱλεώς σοι, Κύριε.

human will, and making it harder to submit to the divine law of sacrifice, and to the supreme necessities of the world's Redemption. Surely the Apostle must have forgotten that the doctrine of the Cross was already[1] a published law of the Christian life! Accordingly, St. Mark tells us[2] that our Lord called together some groups of people who were near, and addressing them as well as His disciples, reasserted the principle which He had before laid down when He first sent forth His Apostles. He told them that any who would really follow Him must take up his Cross. This requirement is grounded upon the fact that the old, outward, sinful, selfish life of man is not his deepest, his true life. "He that loveth his life shall lose it;" he that loves merely the animal life shall forfeit the spiritual; while he that wills even to part with his natural life for the sake of Christ, shall find that a higher and more precious life survives: "he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Our Lord pauses, while His hearers decide upon the issue before them; and His next words assume[3] that they have decided aright. There is a common sense of faith which differs from the common sense of mere "flesh and blood," because it proceeds upon different premises, and implies a larger knowledge of the real conditions and facts of human existence. After all, everything was not lost by taking up the Cross; everything was not gained by refusing it. Our Lord's hearers knew, as we know, that this world soon passes; and they believed that there was a world beyond the grave. Here, then, was a question of profit and loss. What, then, should it *damage* a man, though he should give up the whole world, if only his soul were saved? What shall it *profit* a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul in doing so?

[1] St. Matt. x. 38. [2] St. Mark viii. 34-38. [3] Observe the γάρ.

A German commentator[1] who is usually very diffuse, tersely and truly observes, with respect to this passage, "He who *will* understand it, does understand it." There is no real room for doubt as to the meaning of our Lord's words. When our Lord speaks of losing the soul, "soul" means "soul." It does not mean *bodily* life. The same Greek word has that meaning in some passages of the New Testament, as, for instance, where our Lord bids His disciples "take no thought for their life."[2] But it could not have such a meaning in the precept, "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the *life*;"[3] or, as our version rightly renders it, the *soul*. So in the text our Lord means that which lives when bodily life has been sacrificed to truth or duty, but which may be lost if the lower life be loved too well. But may not "*soul*" mean *moral or spiritual energy*? We speak of a man of soul, meaning a man of heart and thought, and may not the text mean that these are more precious than the material interests to which they are often sacrificed? No; that at least is not the direct sense of our Lord's words. It would have been idle to advise a man to surrender his animal life in order to save his moral and spiritual life, if his personal soul, that which wills and loves, the seat and centre of his moral action, were destroyed by death. Moral life is but an unsubstantial idea apart from the personal soul which lives it; if the soul is destroyed, all is destroyed; you cannot really separate thought and love from the soul which loves and thinks. Besides which, the multitudes who heard our Lord speak would have understood by "soul," just as we do, the spiritual principle and seat of life which survives the body at death. Language ceases to be a sincere expression—a trustworthy vehicle of thought, if it is used in one sense and understood in another. All the

[1] Stier, in his *Reden Jesu*. [2] St. Matt. vi. 25. [3] St. Matt. x. 28.

Jews in our Lord's day (except the Sadducees) believed in the immortality of the soul; and the Sadducees were a small, although learned clique, who had no influence upon the faith of the people. Moreover, St. Luke, in reporting our Lord's words on this occasion, substitutes the word "himself" for "soul."[1] Our Lord may have used an expression in the original Syro-Chaldee, of which the two Evangelists give two equally warrantable renderings, "his own soul" and "himself." The soul, then, which may be lost is the very inmost seat of being; that which thinks in each one of us, but is not thought; that which feels, but is not feeling; that which remembers and is conscious, but is neither consciousness nor memory; that depth, that abyss of life, which we so rarely explore, yet which is within each one of us, which we carry everywhere with us—the one mystery of which perhaps we know less than any other, and yet our very inmost self. "Soul" means here what it means when the Apostles are said to have confirmed the "souls of the disciples,"[2] or when false teachers are described as "beguiling unstable souls,"[3] or when the end of our faith is asserted to be the "salvation of our souls,"[4] or where our Lord is termed the "Shepherd and Bishop of souls,"[5] or where St. John sees under the altar "the souls of them that were slain."[6] And when our Lord speaks of the soul being "lost," He does not mean "annihilated." Even matter, although it continually loses its form and beauty, is not, so far as we know, crushed out of being; it is transformed; it enters into new phases of existence; it passes from animal to animal, from vegetable to animal, from animal to vegetable again; it is analysed, decomposed, recombined; it never ceases to be. Much more is a simple immaterial essence like the soul indestructible; and it can only escape

[1] St. Luke ix. 25. [2] Acts xiv. 22. [3] 2 St. Pet. ii. 14.
[4] 1 St. Pet. i. 9. [5] Ib. ii. 25. [6] Rev. vi. 9.

destruction by preserving what we term personality. The soul may be lost in the sense of being ruined; but it is never crushed or evaporated out of being; once endowed with the gift of life, it lives on, under whatever conditions, for ever. Our Lord then alludes to the terrible possibility of the soul's missing the true end and object of its being, of its becoming, after death, fixed in evil, and so forfeiting the presence of God for ever. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Remark, especially, the form of our Lord's appeal. His words have the tone and flavour, not of abstract, contemplative thought, but of practical and active human life. "What shall it profit a man?" Does any suppose that religion is a dreamy sentiment, a sublimated poetry, good (as the French saying has it) for women and children, and even to be toyed with, like the last production of the Laureate, by the busy, thoughtful father of the family, out of business hours, and in his softer moments? Does any think and speak of religious truth as of some antiquated theory, grateful perhaps to the recluse divine, but too fragile or too finespun to bear the action of the strong, masculine thought of a hard-headed layman in our own busy day? Let such listen to the words of the Redeemer of the world when He asks their attention to the problem of destiny. "What shall it profit?" He condescends with amazing love to the language of man's self-interest; He appeals to the business-like instinct of those whose every energy is devoted to gaining a livelihood or to making a fortune; (I had almost said a bold, I trust it may not be an irreverent thing), He seems to address Himself, with pointed emphasis, to the very temper and instinct of us, the English people. "What shall it profit?" is a question which comes home to a race like ourselves, who are

described in unfriendly phrase, yet with substantial accuracy, as "a nation of shopkeepers." My brethren, we need not wince under that description; we may accept the truth, even though we repudiate the *soubriquet.* Honest industry is always respectable; and the man who earns his bread is in reality quite as noble a being as the man who merely inherits it. But surely that which marks us English off among the nations of the earth is the practical temper which is not dazzled by high pretension and lofty sentiment, which is impatient of mere empty show, mere resultless talk, mere useless activity and bustle, which, while others are enthusiastic, sanguine, venturesome, asks doggedly again and again, "What shall it profit?" Not as the cynic might ask that question—not in scornful indifference to the answer—but with the earnestness of men who wish to ascertain the exact return to be looked for from a proposed action or effort, is it generally asked by our countrymen. On no other spot in God's earth is it asked so earnestly and so often as in this very city of London, the home and centre of the commerce of the world. Here, day by day, commerce projects new forms of enterprise; here she incessantly offers new investments to capital and new opportunities to labour; and not a ship leaves your river, not a railway thrusts itself across, or burrows beneath your thoroughfares, not a company is formed, nor a partnership even distantly hinted at, but a thousand voices ask in chorus, "What shall it profit?" That question is the most familiar idiom, the most universal language, of the busy throngs who live and die immediately around the walls of this cathedral; it represents an interest common to rich and poor, common to wholesale and to retail enterprise; it is asked in private and in public; it is asked by your smallest tradesmen and by your merchant princes; it is asked in your streets, in your committee rooms, and

in your wharves and warehouses; it is asked hurriedly and roughly over the humblest counters: it is hinted gently but firmly in the palaces which are the stately creations of your wealth: and as the tide of enterprise rises and falls, and you, the ministers of this vast temple of commerce, move, in the mystery of your ceaseless restlessness, from its Banks to its Exchanges, from its treasures in specie to its treasures on paper, I read one question, one perpetual inquiry traced eloquently and ever upon your keen, anxious faces, as I walk along your thoroughfares; ay, though your lips be motionless, you think in public, your very thought is visible; it is always and everywhere, "What shall it profit?" And when from the great arteries of your industrial life I pass to the heart from which, and around which, all circulates incessantly; when I note how, with an eagerness unrivalled elsewhere, you ask the question, "What shall it profit?" in the corridors of your national Bank, or on the steps of your Royal Exchange, scrutinising as you do with intelligent severity all that can bear ever so remotely upon the answer; I cannot marvel that the statesmen of Europe study your money articles with scarcely less of respect and curiosity than might be due to some scroll of prophecy, since it naturally seems to them that you sit here with your practised hand laid upon the very pulse of history, and with your strained and privileged ear listening for the yet hidden revelations of Providence. Other nations may venture on reckless speculations, or on bold political experiments; other people may rejoice in the ceremonials of government, in the parade and majesty of power, in military display, or in military expeditions; others may go to war for an idea, and send their legions to a distant Syria or a yet more distant Mexico; but you, as you chronicle their failures or their victories, exhaust the resources of genuine sympathy or of refined irony, while

you ask again and again, in every variety, under every disguise of language, "What shall it profit?" And while that question is asked thus eagerly and persistently without these walls by the busy multitude of men, it is most solemnly asked within them by One Who has reared His throne here for many a century, that He might offer a sanctuary to each wearied soul, and whisper to those who will listen to Him the real secret of their destiny. Jesus Christ also asks, as of old on the hills of Galilee, so now and here in the heart of London, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

My brethren, I submit that His appeal is not only too plain to be misunderstood, it is too practical, too much in harmony with your own way of looking at matters of real importance, to be prudently disregarded.

I.

Now, although the text suggests primarily the incomparable preciousness of the personal soul, we may fairly see in it the assertion of a truth of social and national life. A people may gain the whole world, and lose all those qualities of the head and heart which entitle them to possess it. May we not say of ancient Rome, that she gained the whole world and lost her soul? Just as the tale of her conquests was almost complete, yet ere the Roman eagles were firmly planted on the Euphrates and on the Danube, the soul of the old Republic had departed. The temperance, the courage, the justice, the patriotism of the earlier Romans had died out; and while, in the intoxication of her victories, Rome grasped with one hand the sceptre of the world, she surrendered the liberties and lives of her citizens to the lusts and tyranny of the Cæsars with the other. A people may have been civilised, in the material sense of the word, for centuries, while it remains at heart and for ever barbarian. In

ages when our ancestors were mere savages, living as savages live on the hillsides of Britain or in the forests of Germany, Chinese society was as highly organised, Chinese life as highly embellished, as at the present day. Yet no primitive race was ever capable of the extraordinary cruelties which are now of daily occurrence in China; and the dignity, and the rights of man are nowhere treated with such lofty scorn as in those tribunals which are presided over by the passionless scepticism of a Chinese mandarin. Without a ray of moral life, without a soul, that vast and ancient empire exists as if that it may exhibit to Christendom the worthlessness and feebleness of mere material progress. Yet Pagan empires are no measure of the degradation of which Christian peoples are capable when they sacrifice truth and goodness in an attempt to gain the world. Races which have been illuminated by our Redeemer's Gospel, and whom He has marked with His Sacraments, cannot in their fall be as others, 'who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,' since higher opportunities give scope for a deeper and more fatal corruption. When during the first French Revolution divine honours were paid to one of the daughters of shame throned on the high altar of the cathedral church of Paris, while the streets of that brilliant capital were deluged with the best blood of its citizens, men read God's doom upon a noble people, bent fiercely for the moment upon spiritual suicide, and upon material aggrandisement. And when we hear daily of the gigantic miseries inflicted and endured, by a nation which but yesterday was a British colony, we may reflect that there are dangers against which no institutions or races can be guaranteed, and that we ourselves have our weaknesses and our temptations. Yet how often do men speak as if commercial and industrial enterprises were a vast sacrament of regeneration, warranted to renew national life.

You, too, point to your navies, as they penetrate the most distant oceans, to your railways, as they carry you in a few hours to the most remote points of the country, to your telegraphs, as they flash your thought with the rapidity of lightning from city to city, from capital to capital, to your great thoroughfares, along which are displayed a wealth and luxury which would have astonished Tyrian or Babylonian capitalists, and you say to yourselves that, as a nation, you have gained the world.

My countrymen, I do not dispute your pre-eminence: you are unquestionably the princes of commerce, you reign without a rival over the realm of matter, but have you lost, or are you losing, that which is more precious than any acquisitions of your industry or of your genius? are you becoming the slaves of matter, instead of its masters? Take care; there is a law of assimilation, in virtue of which man becomes like that on which his attention is perpetually fixed: if he looks upward and Godward, his nature rises; if he looks always downward and earthward, his whole character sinks, and his thoughts, his tastes, his aims, his manner of life, his very speech and literature, are correspondingly degraded. To gain the world is one thing; to renew the heart is quite another. Beneath the surface of many an advanced civilisation the human brute crouches, he scarcely slumbers, with the old untamed ferocity of his savage nature; and not merely the accumulations of your capital, but the creations of your science, your new projectiles, your rifled cannon, and your iron-clad steam-vessels, may but enable the nation which has gained the world to prove one day how much she has really lost in gaining it.

Do not misunderstand me—Religion has no quarrel with material improvement; the Church looks with no jaundiced eye upon the wealth and power of the country. We do not forget that early command which bade the

sons of men replenish the earth and *subdue* it; we do not lose sight of the divine injunction, which since the Fall has made labour man's duty, and the fruits of labour his right. Nay rather, Religion owes much to wealth and industry: Hiram of Tyre furnishes material for the Temple, and the Redeemer of the world will have His sacred Feet anointed from the alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious. But if the heart and head of a great people be wholly or mainly given to material interests; if larger incomes, larger warehouses, larger investments, larger manufactories are practically viewed, not as a means to something beyond them, but as an end in themselves; if the production of wealth is looked upon, not as the legitimate result of man's intelligent toil, but as the supreme object of his existence—then, unless we His representatives would forget our Master's work and our Master's honour, we must perforce ask the question, What shall it profit a man, or a company, or a race of men, to gain the whole world, if that which is more precious than the whole world together be lost in gaining it?

After all, let us look at the hard facts before us. We commonly speak of a nation as if it were a living being, with a personal existence, and with a real and not merely a metaphorical soul. But what is a nation but a collection of individuals, who live under one government, and who act in their public capacity together? It might seem that individuals die off while the nation remains; but the truth, the real truth, is that the nation in time passes away, while the units who compose it live for ever. In the next world there will be no England: there will survive only the souls of Englishmen. Permit me to tell you, my brethren, that you yourselves are greater far than the greatest work of your hands; and the question of your individual destinies in eternity is infinitely more

important than the largest material interests which may rightly kindle your wonder or command your honest exertions. So great, so precious are you, that it literally cannot profit you though you gain the whole world if your souls be lost.

II.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the true Friend of man, Who resolutely points our attention to this simple truth, the priceless worth of each human soul. He Himself warns us that the soul may be lost. Yet His gracious warning is the voice of One Who loves us; and every sincere soul must desire to know the truth, be it what it may—truth at all hazards, and with whatever accompaniments—truth, however startling and unwelcome, rather than a delusion, however soft and pleasing. Even the heathen poet could express a generous, human longing for light, "ay, though we should perish in it;" and the Gospel has stimulated and trained to the highest point the passion for truth, as truth, in the soul of man. When our Lord, then, pointing to the eternal future, asks us "What it shall profit us, though we should gain the whole world, and lose our own souls?" it is not for us to nourish a secret irritation as if this were a harsh, exaggerated, or extreme way of stating the problem which lies before each one of us. Surely this question is the very voice of Infinite Mercy which would penetrate our inmost being, and would fold us by one mighty embrace to the Heart of God. Surely if all around us is passing away, and the two realities which remain are the soul within each one of us and God in heaven, it is better that we should see the simple truth and act upon it. The traveller who crosses the Alps at night sees only a foot or two before him, and is as little alive to the extraordinary scene through which he is passing, to the beauties which en-

compass, or to the risks which beset his path, as if he were driving quietly along the level turnpike road from London to Cambridge. But as the early dawn breaks upon him, he becomes aware of those mountain pinnacles which tower above him till they dip their snow-capped summits in the clouds of heaven; he is startled at the sudden revelation of that precipice which yawns at his very feet, and at whose, to him, invisible base there rages a fierce torrent, of which the distant roar falls on his ear. He is moving amid sublimities and dangers of which he had not even caught the outline; and he is grateful to the morning light which certainly has discovered to him a vision of unsuspected beauty, and which possibly has saved him from an untimely death. And what is the question of our Blessed Lord in the text but the very light of heaven bringing out into sharp relief before the eye of our spirits the real conditions of our present existence? Above us are the heights of heaven, beneath us the depths of hell; what shall it profit us to have lived at all, if we do not gain the one and escape the other?

And yet, my brethren, I scarcely anticipate your thoughts when I say that we have already been drifted by the current of this discourse into the presence of an objection which is too frequently urged, and too considerable, to be safely passed over.

"What are you advocating," the objector cries, "but the creed of pure selfishness? Is it true, then, that a Christian is to act simply from motives of personal interest? Is not selfishness the antagonist of love; and is not love—that is, self-forgetfulness, the very essence of the religion of the Redeemer? Surely duty is a higher principle than the pursuit of happiness or the fear of misery? Surely I am to believe what is true, because it is true; to do what is right, because it is right? Do not consecrate here, in the temple of the Infinite Charity, that worship of self

which is the bane of man and the ruin of virtue. Do not bribe me to the homage which I already owe to truth and righteousness by dangling before my eyes the hope of heaven and the fear of hell."

It might suffice to remind ourselves, when pressed by this objection, that it is Jesus Christ Himself Who asks the question, "What shall it profit a man, though he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Are we, then, listening to a higher morality than that of the Gospel? does this very refined objection proceed from a loftier disinterestedness than His, Who abandoned the glories of heaven for the manger of Bethlehem, and Who voluntarily chose to die in agony, as a victim for the sins of the whole world, upon the Cross of Calvary? Certainly the school of Jesus Christ has not hitherto been supposed, even by His enemies, to be the school of selfishness. Their criticism for eighteen hundred years has been this: that He prescribes a self-surrender too absolute, too sublime, to be really practicable. . . . And yet, assuredly, it is a true and generous impulse which aims first not at happiness but at duty; which loves goodness for its own sake, not for the sake of whatever may be got by it; which feels that in the true sense of the word it would not love at all if it loved only for the sake of being happy. Love is necessarily an unmercenary thing; and now, as ever in the Church, the words of the great missionary[1] express the true self-forgetful love of the soul, bending in adoration before the throne of the Redeemer:

"Ah! why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
Should I not love Thee well?
Not for the sake of winning heaven
Or of escaping hell;
Not for the sake of gaining aught,
Not seeking a reward;
But as Thyself hast loved me,
O Ever-loving Lord.

[1] St. Francis Xavier.

E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
And to Thy praise will sing,
Solely because Thou art my God
And my Eternal King."

Yet think you that he who sang thus was other than anxious for the salvation of his soul? Why, as a matter of fact, it was the question of our Lord in the text of this evening which led him to give up the world for God. Or do you suppose that deep anxiety about the eternal weal of the soul is in fact separable at all from the love of the Author of goodness and truth? No; as St. Augustine says, "God has for ever joined the true happiness of us men to His own highest glory." In earthly concerns self-love is one thing and the love of God and of men is another. In the things of heaven, the highest love of self is one and the same thing with the most absolute self-sacrifice. We cannot seek God truly without saving ourselves; we cannot seek to save ourselves without being ready to give up all for God. Certainly, if the bliss of heaven were to be but a continuation of the self-seeking life of men on earth, it might be true that to desire the eternal weal of the soul would be a distinctly lower thing than the desire of goodness for its own sake. As it is, the two things are, while separate in idea, inseparable in fact. In desiring our own salvation, we aim at God's highest glory; in desiring to live for and possess God, because He is what He is, we desire our own eternal "profit." And our Saviour appeals to our highest capacities for sacrifice, no less than to our one legitimate and ineradicable sense of self-interest, when He asks, "What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Therefore, in these searching words of Christ we have a first principle—a main-spring—of sincere personal religion. We live in a day when earnestness is welcomed for

its own sake; the cold indifferentism which reigned everywhere in the society of the last century, and which even went far to paralyse the Church, is now, thank God, at a discount. When Goethe said that "earnestness is life," his genius discerned one of the watchwords of the opening nineteenth century, even if his heart did not prompt the utterance. But we cannot be earnest merely because we admire earnestness as an abstract quality. We cannot lash ourselves into a sincere enthusiasm because we feel, and truly, that a man who is enthusiastic about nothing is much to be pitied. To be earnest, we need a definite conviction. Given an object, a motive power, which commands the love, the interest, of the soul, and earnestness, genuine earnestness, will follow. Now I can conceive nothing more calculated to make a man thoroughly earnest about religion than daily repetition to himself—daily reflection on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the text. I would venture to advise each person in this vast congregation to ask himself, each morning and each evening for one month, this question: "What shall it profit me, if I should gain the whole world, and lose my own soul?" We read the Gospel nowadays too superficially: we glance at the surface of discourse and narrative; we forget the inexhaustible depths of strength and tenderness which underlie each of the words of Christ. We have no true conception of the vast powers of action and resistance which are dormant in every human soul—in our souls—till we open upon ourselves the play, the penetrating, rousing, controlling force of one mighty soul-absorbing motive. And such a motive there is in that view of our eternal destiny which is suggested by the question of the text.

Are there in this congregation any who have lived hitherto for time, and for the things of time, but who are drawn by the secret guidance of the Eternal Spirit, and

by the converging providences of God, towards His love and His service? Do you yearn to give yourselves to Him? Do you indeed perceive that the best and purest aspirations of your hearts are absolutely in harmony with the verdict of your intelligence and common-sense when you allow yourselves to look the fact of life, in all its height and depth, in all its loveliness and awfulness, fairly in the face? Do you know and feel that to live except for God, to live in forgetfulness of the endless future which awaits the soul, is a vast folly, a mistake so gigantic, that no other mistake in life can rival it? Yet still something holds you back: habits, friendships, cherished plans, great ambitions, or petty ambitions; and you halt, as if on the summit of Pisgah, wistfully gazing at the land of promise, but almost resigning yourselves to die beyond the Jordan—almost persuaded, like Agrippa, yet shrinking from thefull persuasion which is within your reach. What shall it profit—that delay, that clinging to what you have already condemned—what shall it profit when for you time is no more, and you have entered on eternity? One verse of the Epistle to the Romans decided the conversion of St. Augustine; and surely the answer, the only possible answer to our Lord's question might avail to break the thraldom of a soul at the crisis of its destiny, and while crowning its responsibilities by a flood of light, "to guide its feet into the way of peace," and to the Cross of the Redeemer.

Is any here, serving God, yet conscious of being from time to time exposed to a great and, for him, a dangerous temptation—a temptation, we will suppose, which appeals powerfully to the secret sympathies of his character, or to tastes and inclinations which were fostered by old habits of sin, and which have never been perfectly eradicated, or to intellectual difficulties, which he sees through when he kneels in prayer, but which he

easily exaggerates when the forbidden fruit is tempting, and Satan asks, "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat?" What is that temptation but the flower which grows just over the edge of the precipice? It is possible that you may pick it, and yet recover your footing; it is also possible, nay probable, that in the attempt to gather it you will perish in the abyss below. At such a time it is well to meet the tempter with a single motive of tried power—one stone from the brook may suffice to conquer the champion of the Philistines. Ere you yield to that strong ambition, ere you tell that profitable lie, ere you gratify that vehement passion, ere you drug your conscience that you may form that acquaintance or that friendship so certain to improve your social position, so likely to be fatal to the sincerity and the consistency which is due to our Tender and Gracious Friend in heaven—look well down into the depths of the eternity which is before you, and ask the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" What shall it profit him, too, if he gain, not the whole world, but something which he will fling to the winds five minutes after gaining it? We do not escape the tremendous issue of our decisions because our temptations are trifles. Eternity is out of all proportion to the things of time. A soul may be sold and sacrificed by the enormous crimes which enable some gigantic ambition to mount an imperial throne and to found an imperial dynasty, but a soul may also be sacrificed by the petty, but conscious dishonesty which looks God full in the Face and then asks a halfpenny too much for a pound of sugar.

Are any here who have felt the attraction, for generous souls the strong attraction, of self-sacrifice for God? Such there have been in our day, who, yearning like the first Apostles to abandon all for Christ, have been more

earnest in their desire to serve Him than cautious in their inquiry how He may best be served. It has been a relief to them to leave home and friends; to trample upon their education and their prospects; to count all earthly things but dung, that they might taste the sweetness of unreserved self-sacrifice; to persuade themselves that they were as yet without the Holy Fold, that they might copy, ay to the very letter, the self-denial which was preached and practised of old in the cities of Galilee. We may have known such who, to their loss and to ours, have wandered from the fold of the English Church. But while it is impossible for us, who know that here we have a certain and well-authenticated place within the walls of the City of God, to act or speak as if we were outside Her, let us honour, let us cherish, let us copy, in lawful ways, the example of self-sacrifice. Every station in life offers opportunities of giving thought, or time, or personal labour, or income in some shape or other, to the care of the souls and to the cause of God. At this very moment, —to take one instance out of many—there are crowded hospitals in this great city, where the sick and suffering are tended by devoted women who have been bred in refinement and luxury but who have renounced all that woman holds dear that they might find their one and sufficient reward in the eternal smile of their Lord and Master. And there are others who gaze at this spectacle of sacrifice and who long to copy it, but who, while ignorance and sin and wretchedness fester beneath the polished surface of society into new and more threatening forms of corruption and of death, are withheld from self-consecration by some taste, some anticipation, some object or motive which will count for nothing in the light of eternity. It is for such to ask themselves, "What shall it profit a man, or a woman, if the world be gained or retained, and that highest conception of duty, which is the

brightest light of conscience, and the very voice of God, be forfeited?"

Lastly, let us look at our Lord's words under the light which is thrown upon them by two events equally certain —one past and one future: one, the moment of our own death agony, the other, the death-scene of our crucified Lord Himself.

An aged Christian once met a young man who was entering business and laying out his plans for life. "You are settled in business, I understand?" "Yes." "And what do you intend next?" "I shall marry." "And what then?" "I shall make a fortune." "And what then?" "I shall enter public life." "And what then?" "I shall make a family reputation." "And what then?" "Well, I suppose I shall get old." "And what then?" "Well, in time, of course, I shall die." "And what then?" The young man was silent: he had never looked so far ahead.

We know that we—each one of us—must die. Here there is entire agreement between the voice of faith and the voice of experience. Of all that will precede death we are ignorant. Will it be a long illness, or an unforeseen occurrence that will kill us? Will death come to us many years hence, or this year, this month, this night? Shall we die in our beds, or at our daily work? at home and among friends, or on a journey and among strange faces? in the time of sleep, or in time of prayer? Shall we be the victims of an epidemic, or of a railway accident, or of a desperate act of violence? We know not. God has veiled this future, in His mercy, from our eyes; but one fact He has announced to us, and it receives the greater prominence from our ignorance of everything around and beside it—we are sure that we must die. No precautions, no medicines, no physicians, no watering-places, no affectionate care of friends, no strong masterful clinging to life in ourselves, can obtain a reprieve of our

sentence. We must die. And at the moment of death whenever it be, or wherever it be, if the soul be granted one moment of consciousness it will have no difficulty in answering the question of the text. Departing soul! when all here is fading from the sight of thy glazing eye, and when the clouds are rolling away, which have hidden from thy view the realities of the eternal world, say, what shall it profit thee, if thou hast gained wealth, or reputation, or power on earth, while thou thyself art lost? The dying, we know, have before now prayed for one hour of reprieve—only one; but the prudence of faith does not wait until death to ask the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

And He Who alone can help the dying teaches by His own death the meaning, the responsibility, of life. Before your eyes, as of old in Galatia, "Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified."[1] Faith spans at a bound the interval of eighteen centuries, and lives on Calvary. There He hangs between earth and heaven—the Divine Friend of sinners—His Head crowned with thorns, His Eyes reddened with weeping, His Feet, His Hands, His Side pierced and torn. There He offers to the Eternal Father "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;" while from His open Wounds there flows forth a plenteous Stream of life, that It may give power to His Sacraments, and freedom and strength and beauty to the souls of His redeemed. It is at the foot of the Cross that we learn the cost, and withal the true duty, the real interest, of the human soul. Brethren, let us be wise, while yet we may. There are prizes on earth and treasures in heaven more precious and enduring than the things of time and sense . . . yet it is as the children of time that we take our measures for eternity; and while time is short, eternity is long.

[1] Gal. iii. 1.

SERMON V.

THE CONFLICT: WITH UNDUE EXALTATION OF INTELLECT.[1]

2 Cor. x. 5.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

HERE is an Apostle of the Lord Jesus who speaks the language of a soldier. He is planning a campaign; nay, rather, he is making war: he glows with the fire of a genuine military enthusiasm. The original Greek which he uses has a vigour and point in it which is lost, to a great extent, in our English translation. He might almost be a Roman general, charged to sustain the honour of the Empire in a revolted province or beyond a remote frontier; he might seem to be illustrating the haughty maxim which defined the duty of an imperial people—

"To spare the vanquished but to crush the proud."

Indeed, it has been urged that the recent history of Cilicia itself may have well suggested this language to St. Paul. The Apostle's native country had been the scene of some very fierce struggles in the wars against Mithridates and the pirates; and we are told that the latter war was only ended, not sixty years before the Apostle's birth, by the reduction of one hundred and twenty strongholds and the capture of more than ten

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on March 17th, 1865, as part of a course of sermons on "The Enduring Conflict of Christ with the Sin that is in the World."

thousand prisoners.[1] The dismantled ruins may have easily and naturally impressed the boyish imagination of Saul of Tarsus with a vivid sense of the destructive energy of the military power of Rome; but the Apostle of the nations only remembers these earlier impressions to give them a spiritual application. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal; the standard under which he fights is a more sacred sign than that of the Cæsar; the operations which he projects are to be carried out in a territory more difficult of conquest than any which kept the conquerors of the world at bay. He is invading the region of human thought; and as he fights for God, he is sternly resolved upon conquest. He sees rising before him the lofty fortresses of hostile errors; they must be reduced and razed.[2] Every mountain fastness[3] to which the enemy of Light and Love can retreat must be scaled and destroyed, and all the thought of the human soul[4] which is hostile to the authority of Divine truth must be "led away as a prisoner of war"[5] into the camp of Christ. Truly a vast and unaccountable ambition; a dream—if it were not, as it was, a necessity; a tyranny—if anything less vigorous and trenchant had been consistent with the claims of the Truth of God, or equal to the needs of the soul of man.

The particular opposition to the work of Christ which the Apostle encountered at Corinth was indeed less intellectual in its make than the Galatian Judaism, or than the theosophic angel-worship which was popular at Colossæ, or than the sharply-defined heresies of a later time which, as we know from the Pastoral Epistles, threatened or infected the Churches of Ephesus and

[1] Stanley *in loc.*, who quotes Appian, *Bell. Mith.*, 234-238.

[2] καθαιροῦντες, the military term for reducing a fortress. See Wetstein *in loc.*; Elsner, Obs., p. 152, qu. by Meyer.

[3] ὕψωμα is apparently the Hebrew בָּמָה. Stanley *in loc.*

[4] πᾶν νόημα. Cf. Meyer *in loc.*

[5] αἰχμαλωτίζοντες.

Crete. St. Paul's Corinthian opponents resisted, depreciated, disowned, beyond everything else, the Apostle's own personal authority. This, however, was the natural course of things at a time when single Apostles well-nigh impersonated the whole doctrinal action of the Church; and feeling this, St. Paul speaks not as one who was reasserting a personal claim of any sort, but merely and strictly as a soldier, as an organ, I might say, as a function, of the truth. The truth had an indefeasible right to reign in the intellect of man. The Apostle asserts that right when he speaks of bringing the whole intelligence of man into the obedience of Christ. Now, as then, Christ's Church is militant here on earth, not less in the sphere of thought than in the sphere of outward and visible action; and St. Paul's burning words rise above the temporary circumstances which called them forth, and furnish a motto and an encouragement to us who, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, fight in the ranks of the same army and against the same kind of foes as he did.

Remark, first of all, that it is "the undue exaltation of intellect" with which the Church of Christ is in energetic and perpetual conflict. With intellect itself—with the thought of man recognising at once its power and its weakness, its vast range and its necessary limits—Religion has, can have, no quarrel. It were a libel on the All-wise Creator to suppose that between intellect and spirit, between thought and faith, there could be any original relations other than those of perfect harmony. Paradise could have been the scene of no such unseemly conflict as that which we are considering; and here, as elsewhere in human nature, we are met by unmistakable traces of the Fall of our first parent. A range of granite mountains, which towers proudly above the alluvial soil of a neighbouring plain and above the softer rocks at its

immediate base, speaks to the geologist of a subterranean fire that at some remote epoch has thus upheaved the primal crust of the earth with convulsive violence. And the arrogant pretensions of human thought in the children of Adam speak no less truly of an original wound which has marred the harmony of the faculties of the soul, and has forced the mind of fallen man into an attitude which instinctively disputes the claims of Revelation. But that attitude is no part of the Creator's handiwork; it is due to the creature's own abuse of the perfect freedom of his will. For originally intellect is the ally and discoverer of truth; it finds its highest employment as the instrument of *religious* truth; and Jesus Christ, Who restores the harmony of our nature, speaks, through His Church, "a wisdom," or philosophy, "among them that are perfect;"[1] a wisdom of which illuminated intellect is the student and guardian, and which amply recognises the high and abundant honour which the Creator has put upon His creature's thought.

But the Fall did not merely deprive human reason of the light of grace; it so disturbed the original structure of our nature as to make reason generally the slave of passion instead of its master. And therefore the intellect which exalts itself against Revelation is often, in reality, not free intellect, but intellect acting under the secret bidding of an irritated passion. Not that intellect is itself usually conscious that it is thus acting under orders. The passions, like some women, know how to disguise, and even how to recommend their despotism by the graceful movements and gentle courtesies of a well-simulated obedience. Or at best, intellect is but half conscious that it is not free; and therefore it asserts its freedom with that passionate vehemence with which persons who feel their place in society to be a

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 6.

little doubtful are apt to insist upon their social claims. Certainly intellect never vaunts its freedom with such nervous eagerness as when it is in conflict with the Revelation of God. For instance, we do not say to ourselves again and again that we are the champions of free thought when we are engaged in the study of pure mathematics. Mathematics do not touch our moral nature; we suspect nothing; we solve an equation as dispassionately as if we were ourselves pure reason, and nothing else—beings without passion, without conscience, without will, without a moral history. But Revelation, by its every dogma and every precept, at once challenges the activity of will and conscience; and the passions, like those watch-dogs who warn the inhabitants of remote country-houses of the approach of a stranger, sound an alarm within the soul at the first signs of the Coming of the Son of Man. Thus natural intellect meets the heavenly Visitant, sometimes with a movement of sudden sharp irritation, sometimes with a stern but unavowed resolution to resist Him, generally without frankness and real freedom of welcome, like a person who felt it necessary to be upon his guard and to maintain an attitude of secret if not of defiant suspicion.

Look around you, my brethren, and mark the varieties of intellect which enter in various ways into this conflict with religion. There is, first of all, mercenary intellect. This intellect writes or talks at the rate of so much per annum, and on a given understanding. "You take so much, and you write up that minister, you advocate that line of policy, you denounce this institution, you attack that theory, you blacken that public man."—"Done." Necessity, it may be said, knows no law; and there is an unexpressibly sad proverb about poverty, to the effect that it cannot afford to have a conscience. We need not now care to examine that

saying too narrowly: some of us perhaps have known cases in which really noble souls have bent to a degradation from which they shrank in secret agony, and from which, long ago, they would have torn themselves away if the comfort and even the life of others near and dear to them had not been dependent on their sad, ignoble toil. Gladly indeed would I here be silent. But when this hired intellect, in bondage to sharp necessity or to the mere spirit of gain, passionately asserts its monopoly of freedom, and even tells us, the ministers of Christ, who have freely entered His service, and who rejoice in what it calls our fetters, that we are not free;—I cannot be surprised, because I understand the situation in which it finds itself; but I must be permitted to protest. Certainly we may admit that conflict with religion under the circumstances is sufficiently natural; it is an expedient for asserting the appearance of freedom, at little cost and with considerable dramatic effect.

Again, look at self-advertising intellect. Here is a vain man, who has a certain power of thought and expression. This intellect is bent on achieving a reputation, no matter how. It will write something startling, or, as it would say, original; it will deny all that has been affirmed, and denounce all that has been held in reverence. When it asserts that this or that Book of the Divine Scripture is but a collection of foolish legends, it will take a certain pleasure in the thought of all the varied perplexity, and vexation, and distress, and bustle, and deliberations, which it will cause among religious persons who chance to meet with its irritating production. Probably it has no wish to cause unnecessary pain; but its object is notoriety, and notoriety is only possible to it under these conditions.

Again, there is sensualised intellect—intellect under the guidance and command of animal passion. This is

no fancy species. It were not difficult to point to whole literatures, characterised by the greatest fertility of thought, and power, and beauty of language, whose entire drift and purpose is to rouse in the imagination and veins of man those fiery passions which are his worst enemy.

Again, there is the self-reliant or cynical intellect, too independent to be mercenary, too proud to be vain, too self-respecting to be the slave of sense; yet just as little free as the most mercenary, or vain, or sensualised thought, since it is the slave of a sublime egotism, although its slavery is well disguised, and its own cold, clear, incisive energy passes among men for the very bloom and majesty of perfect intellectual freedom. We need not examine other varieties; nor may we forget that here and there among the earnest opponents of the Gospel there are to be found elect souls with a pure and devoted love of truth—souls whom adverse circumstances have for a while bewildered and misled, but whose true home is in the camp of Christ. These have not yet found the road to Damascus; but we may safely leave them to the love and providence of the Good God. But with or without them, it is plain that we are in presence of a body of active thought, not the less vigorous because it works for hire, or for vainglory, or for sensual delight, or for some refined or magnificent ambition; not the less vigorous because it is a slave; but which, as being enslaved to powers who are instinctively opposed to the Gospel, is certain to find itself, sooner or later, in conflict with the living, working power of that Gospel among the thoughts and hearts of men.

It is noteworthy, and indeed it is implied in the language of the Apostle, that intellectual opposition to Revelation, except on great occasions, and under the leadership of distinguished captains, does not usually meet us Christians in the open field. I do not, indeed,

forget Celsus, or Porphyry, or Voltaire, or Strauss; but look at scepticism in the second generation, or as it meets you in everyday life, and you will find that its instinct is to take refuge on natural heights, or behind artificial earthworks; that it screens itself under the cover of some false principle, or of some unwarrantable assumption. To "cast down these imaginations" may be less exciting than the whirl and noise of a general engagement; but it is the everyday and practical aspect of the conflict which we are considering. And if with limited time, and in so vast a field, it is here necessary to resign one-half, or more than one-half, of the outline before us, I shall proceed briefly to notice one or two of the leading false principles and assumptions which now oppose the work of Jesus Christ our Lord in the souls of men. Much will be thereby lost to the subject in the completeness of speculative treatment; more, I humbly think, will be won, if any one Christian who hears me is better enabled to understand and to take his part in the unceasing and mighty struggle between human error on the one side, and the Truth which came from heaven eighteen centuries ago on the other.

(*a.*) Now a primary characteristic of sceptical intellect is its unwillingness to make room for faith, to acknowledge the true province and sphere of Revelation. Intellect assumes itself to cover the whole field of thought; it grudges the admission that there may exist a higher world beyond its ken, and over which it has no purchase or power of vision. Above the world of mere sense there is the world of reason and natural thought: that is granted. But it is tacitly assumed that there is no world beyond; and that although man is notoriously a threefold being, composed of body, soul, and spirit,[1] yet that spirit, his highest and most ennobling characteristic,

[1] 1 Thess. v. 23.

has no object-matter beyond that which can be ministered to it by the natural intelligence of the soul. Intellect feels itself humiliated if it be supposed to be debarred from the sight of any spiritual fact; and as not more than a few facts of a strictly spiritual character are dimly discerned even by the *élite* of natural intelligences, men deem it essential to the supposed dignity of their reason to deny the existence of an order of things which unilluminated reason does not see. Yet in the study of the natural world we find no such unworthy sensitiveness as to the power and range of the bodily organ of sight. Look towards the heavens, and ask the astronomer whether beyond the stars and suns that reveal themselves to his most powerful telescopes there are stars and suns which his instruments cannot enable him to detect; and he will tell you that by his observations he can determine the existence and movements of such purely invisible bodies with the unerring certainty of mathematical reason. Ask him whether there are yet other bodies in the infinitude of space too remote to be apprehended by the penetrating gaze even of his formulæ; and he will reply, not merely that the existence of such bodies is possible, but that the analogies of his science lead him to regard it as nothing less than certain. Ask, on the other hand, the entomologist, whose microscope has discovered to him the strange forms which people each drop of water, or each fraction of a cubic inch of atmosphere, whether he has yet reached the last term, the most minute embodiment of the principle of life, and he will hesitate to assume that he has yet done more than ascertain the existence of an order of creatures who may be as very monsters in the eyes of an invisible population of beings around and beyond them. It is no discredit to the organs of sense, that even when thus stimulated and strengthened by a scientific apparatus, they fail us

at a point when we cannot but feel that beyond their ken there lies a world which a higher power than sense must discover, and which we explore as best we may under the guidance of inference. Nor need Reason be jealous if she herself cannot always satisfy—if as we ascend the mountain of thought she reaches a stage at which she must leave us in sheer bewilderment to the perilous guidance of imagination, unless she is content to intrust us to the well-attested authority, to the practised eye, and to the sure guardianship of divine faith. Reason, indeed, can do much, even beyond the province in which she confessedly reigns. She can prove to man that he possesses an immaterial soul, that his will is really free, that deep in his secret heart there is the mysterious but indelible law which distinguishes right from wrong. Reason, as she studies human society, can formulate the principles of justice and order, which are essential to its permanency; she can even reach a certain knowledge of the First Cause of all; she can demonstrate His existence by two or three lines of argument; she can infer that He is One, that He is a personal Being, that He is infinite in His perfections, and unfettered in His action and His will, and that His creatures are under the strongest possible obligations towards Him. Certainly, Reason is peculiarly happy, if without the (at least) indirect guidance of a supernatural Revelation she can reach as far as this; and she knows well that each step of her advance is certain to be disputed. But she can penetrate no further, and her highest conquests do but suggest problems which she cannot solve, and afford glimpses of a world on which she may not presume to enter. She has at best discovered enough to make life a dreary mystery, and the prospect of death a frightful nightmare. What knows she of the Inner Life of God, as He has opened it to us believing Christians in the

august doctrine of the most Holy Trinity? What can she tell us concerning the real nature and effect of sin, concerning the law of its action, and the law of its removal? What can she propose on the all-important and pressing question whether any and what communion is possible between the soul and God? What, in other words, has she that can meet the needs of the soul of man, as they are met by the Christian doctrines of the Atoning Death and mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, of the work of the Holy Spirit, the power of penitence, the power of prayer, the power of the Sacraments? Certainly she has her own sphere and province; we may not ignore it; we may not depreciate it in the supposed interests of faith, as if faith could only reign when reason was insulted; but she must accept her providential place; she must make room for faith; she must act as its handmaid, not as its substitute; or her pride will surely prepare for her a terrible chastisement. There is no saying how low an intelligence may fall, which, persevering in its determination to rise no higher than itself, voluntarily immerses itself in its own dark prison-house, and sinks deeper and deeper into the abyss as it madly flies from the knowledge and love of the Infinite God.

(*β.*) But when the possibility, the need, and even—to take a long stride—the fact, of a supernatural revelation has been admitted, the rebellious intellect of man renews the conflict at a point beyond. "At least," it is urged, "a stipulation must be made as to the contents of Revelation: Revelation must not include mysteries. Whatever may be revealed, it shall not elude our full mental grasp; we will assume ourselves to possess a verifying faculty which shall eliminate from Revelation all that wears the air of mystery, since mystery is inconsistent with that intellectual dignity which becomes us men, even when we are listening to the Most High God."

I might indeed insist, with Bishop Butler, on the unreasonableness of determining beforehand what a Revelation from God ought or ought not to contain, since we are in no position to speculate with any success or safety upon such a subject. But I will ask a simple question; What, my brethren, do you mean by mystery? You have, it may be, invested the word with some damaging sense that does not in reality belong to it. Mystery, you think, is but another name for a confused statement, or for a contradiction, or for an impossibility, or for a purely unintelligible process, or for something which is believed on no sufficient grounds whatever, or for a reverie of the heated religious imagination. No, believe it, a mystery is none of these things. A mystery is a truth, a fact, but a hidden truth. We see some truths directly, just as in the open air we gaze with the bodily eye upon the sun shining in the heavens. We know other truths indirectly, just as we know that the sun is shining from the ray of sunlight which streams in at the window of the room in which we are sitting. Now a mystery is a truth of the latter kind; it is apprehended as true, it is not comprehended; it does not lie on the surface of things, it cannot be seen in itself, it can only be known from the evidence or symptoms of its presence. Yet the evidence, whatever it be, proves to us that the truth is there; and the truth is not the less a truth because it is itself shrouded from our direct gaze. Thus St. Paul speaks of the mystery of the Incarnation and of the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles when alluding to the fact that these divine purposes were hidden for ages in the mind of God, and at length revealed;[1] and he speaks of marriage as a great mystery, meaning that it embodies a secret correspondence to the union between our Lord and His Church, which does not lie

[1] Rom. xvi. 25; and Eph. i. 9, iii. 3-5.

upon the surface;[1] and the clergy are "stewards of the mysteries of God,"[2] that is to say, specially of the Sacraments, each of which is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," although the presence of the inward grace is inferred not necessarily from experience, but always from our Saviour's promise. Certainly in Religion we are surrounded by mysteries, that is to say, by truths, of the presence of which we are aware, but the internal nature and complete range of which we cannot fully comprehend; and I may add, that the wonderful world in which we men live, whether the higher world of faith be open to our gaze or not, is a very home and temple of transcendent mysteries. You walk to-morrow afternoon into the country, and you note how here and there the swelling buds, or the first fresh green of the opening leaf, reminds you that already the spring is about to re-enact before your eyes the beautiful spectacle of her yearly triumph. Everywhere around you there are evidences of the movements of a mysterious power which you can neither see, nor touch, nor define, nor measure, nor understand. This power lives speechless, noiseless, unseen, yet energetic in every bough above your head, in every blade of grass beneath your feet. It bursts forth from the grain into the shoot, from the branch into the bud, and leaf, and flower, and fruit; it creates bark, and fibre, and height, and bulk, and grace of form and lustre of colour; it is incessant in its labour, it is prodigal of its beauty, it is uniformly generous and bountiful in its gifts to man. Yet, in itself, what is it? You give it a name; you call it vegetation: and perhaps you are a botanist, you trace and you register the variety of its effects and the laws of its movement. But, after all, you have only labelled it; and though it is so common, it is not in reality

[1] Eph. v. 32. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

familiar to you; and though you have watched it unthinkingly from your childhood upwards, and perhaps see in it nothing particular now, you may well pause in wonder and awe before it, for of a truth it is a mystery. What is it in itself, this power which is so certainly around you, yet which so perfectly escapes you when you attempt to detect or to detain it in your grasp; what is it, this pervading force, this life-principle, this incomprehensible yet most certainly present fact, but an assertion of the principle of mystery which robes the soil of God's earth with beauty, that everywhere it may cheer the faith and rebuke the pride of man? Yes, when next you behold the green field or the green tree, be sure that you are in the presence of a very sacrament of nature, since your eye rests upon the outward and visible sign of an inward and wholly invisible force.

Or look at those other forces with which you seem to be so much at home, and which you term attraction and gravitation. What do you really know about them? You name them: perhaps you can repeat a mathematical expression which measures their action; but, after all, you have only named and described an effect; you have not accounted for, you have not penetrated, you have not unveiled its cause. Why, I ask, in the nature of things, should such laws reign around us? They do reign, but why? what is the power which determines gravitation, where does it reside, how is it to be seized, apprehended, touched, examined? There it is: but there, inaccessible to your keenest study, it remains veiled and buried; you confess a presence which you cannot analyse. And you yourselves,—fearfully and wonderfully made as you are,—what are you but living embodiments alike in your lower and your higher natures, and in the law of their union, of this principle of mystery? The power which feels and moves in your bodies eludes the knife of the

anatomist as he lays bare each nerve and each muscle, that contributes to the perfection of feeling and movement. Yet how much more utterly mysterious is your human nature when we examine its higher aspects; when we analyse thought, and personality, and the marvellous mystery of language, whereby thought takes nothing less than a physical form, and passes by means of a sensible vehicle from one immaterial spirit to another! Truly, if it were possible to linger here, it would be hard to terminate this catalogue of mysteries, so extraordinary, so familiar, so near to us always and everywhere, yet always and everywhere so above our comprehension. But I forbear.

My brethren, you will pardon me if I say that to object to the presence of mystery in Revelation is at least irrational. Surely, as we mount in the scale of being, we must expect an increase both in the number and magnitude of these hidden truths; and when we reach His throne Who is the Summit and the Source of all, we can hardly suppose that because He has deigned to lay bare to us the secrets of His Nature and the laws of His action upon our life, that His Revelation will differ from that natural world which reflects Him in that it will discard this principle of mystery. Yet when it is no longer a secret objection against the doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, or of the Incarnation, or of original sin, or of the Satisfaction which Jesus offered on the Cross, or of the efficacy of the Sacraments, that these doctrines in various ways embody, as they do, the principle of mystery; the soul has succeeded in casting down an imagination—an entrenched fortress—which too often exalts itself against the knowledge of God; it is, so far, in a fair way to bring its whole thought into the obedience of Christ.

(γ.) But there is a third line of resistance upon which

the reason of man falls back in its opposition to revealed truth. It grants that a Revelation has been given; it allows that portions at least of the revealed truth are mysteries—mysterious still, although their existence is revealed. But, at least, it exclaims, Revelation shall not be dogmatic. If she is still to meet with public acceptance, Christianity must abandon the pretension to offer a fixed, sharply defined body of truth to the acceptance or rejection of the soul of man. Let the religion of Jesus only come to the men of our time as a finished poem; and they will read, they will learn, they will love it. They will not inquire too accurately whether it be literally true; nor will it put such force upon their thought and will as to make any violent or serious change in the natural current of their life. They will indeed be much as they would have been without it; and yet it will exercise a kindly, gentle sway over thought and society; it will breathe upon human character a soft yet elevating influence; and if it exacts little intellectual homage, and exerts no tangible moral force, yet at least it will have the merit of provoking no keen resistance. Such, we are told, must be the religion of our day: intellect has condemned the principle of dogma, and religion is accordingly bidden to accommodate herself to the changed circumstances and imperious necessities of the time.

On close inspection it will, I think, be found that the dislike of clear doctrinal statements is only a disguised form of opposition to the truth which those statements embody. If, for instance, a man believes in the existence of one Supreme Being, he has no objection to saying explicitly that there is One God. It does not occur to him that in making that statement he is guilty of an intellectual narrowness, or of a want of perfect good taste; nor supposing him to be a serious theist, does he hold it necessary presently to balance his profession of

belief in God by some other statement which shall reduce it to the level of an uncertainty. Yet to say that there is One God is to make an essentially dogmatic statement. Every man who makes that statement intelligently, knows that it has a tremendous bearing on the belief of millions, alas! of the human race at this very moment. Yet the man makes the statement for the simple reason that he has no doubt of the truth which it embodies. If, then, he presently hesitates to say that Jesus Christ is truly God as well as truly Man, or that the Death of Jesus on the cross was a Propitiatory Offering for human sin, it is, I apprehend, because he does not believe the truths which are thus stated in human language. If he urges that a dogmatic statement is more or less unsatisfactory in that, owing to the imperfection of human speech, it leaves unanswered, or rather it suggests, many concomitant questions; I reply that this is no less true when you assert the Unity of God than when you assert the Godhead or the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. If he dislikes dogma because, forsooth, dogma is the "stagnation," or the "imprisonment," or the "paralysis" of thought, I pass by the substance of his objection for the moment, only to observe that it applies to his statement that there is One God, just as much as to any other proposition in the Nicene or Athanasian Creeds. When he confesses that there is One God, he voluntarily renounces the right and the wish to entertain the idea of two gods or of many gods; just as when we Christians profess our belief in the atoning virtue of our Saviour's Death, or in the mighty regenerating power of His Baptism, we renounce with all our hearts the desire to suppose that the Death of Jesus was a mere martyrdom, or that Baptism is a graceful, but, speaking spiritually, a useless piece of ceremonial. In either case faith finds in the dogmatic statement its

support; in either case unbelief can see in the statement which it disbelieves nothing but a fetter or a prison wall. Faith hails in dogma the regulation of its thought, not its stoppage, not its imprisonment, not its petrification; just as the mathematician finds in the axioms which are the base of his science the fixed principles which guide his onward progress, not the tyrannical obstacle which enthralls and checks him. And unbelief decries dogma, not because dogma is really an impediment to faith, but because it is faith's true and trusty friend. The real crime of dogma is that it treats as settled and certain that which unbelief would fain regard as doubtful or false. If you believe a thing to be true, you have no objection to saying so; and when Christianity is warned not to be dogmatic, it is irresistibly implied, that however beautiful she may be, she must not assume to be absolutely true.

Here is the third "high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God" in this our day and country, namely, the dislike of fixed doctrinal statements. Observe that I am not denying that false dogmas have been and are proposed to the faith of this or that body of Christians. I admit that even true dogmas may be proposed by incompetent authority. But these are questions of detail; and the point before us is a broad question of principle. If, with the Apostle, we believe in the everlasting Gospel, we rejoice with him to proclaim its truth; nay, more, when he exclaims, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,"[1] we answer tenderly, seriously, firmly, "Amen."

Yes, I understand, it seems to you severe, this last, this crowning exigency of Divine Truth. Yet the preju-

[1] Gal. i. 8.

dice against dogma is the last stronghold of the enemy; it is a position from which he must be dislodged at any cost, or your previous victories may soon be forfeited. Surely it is of little avail to grant that a Revelation has been given, and even that this heavenly gift is replete with mystery; if no one truth revealed may be stated in terms as absolutely certain; if the point, the power, the effect of no one mystery may be presented to the vision of the believing soul. If Religion is to be a practical thing, it must depend, not upon beautiful thoughts, but upon matter-of-fact certainties. Its truths must come to us in a form in which we can carry them with us, and bring them to bear upon our motives in the hour of temptation. When tempted we need something solid to fall back upon; not a picture, not a mist, not a view, not an hypothesis, but a fact. For eighteen centuries Christianity has responded to this supreme necessity of the soul of man; and we may be sure that if she had done otherwise, she would long ago have ceased to command interest at the hands of those who seek in Religion, not an amusement for the passing hour, but a kind friend, with a firm hand, who will guide them through the changes and chances of this mortal life to the gate of that other world which we must all, in whatever guise, reach at last.

You may naturally ask, my brethren, what place in a Lenten course of sermons can reasonably be found for considerations so abstract, so apparently removed from the immediate and pressing wants of the penitent and struggling soul, as some of the foregoing have been. I can only reply by pointing to the actual circumstances of our own day, and especially in this place. Penitence presupposes at least a certain measure of faith; and faith is proscribed by that undue exaltation of intellect which leaves no room for it, and which

denounces the principles of mystery and dogma. Before a man can kneel with a broken and contrite heart at the foot of the Cross of the Redeemer of the world, these high things which exalt themselves against the knowledge of God must be levelled, and his thought must be brought into the obedience of Christ. The great conflict which rages between the pride of natural intellect and the claims of faith, is fought out on no remote or imaginary battle-field. Every thoughtful mind, in this our distracted and anxious day, is the scene upon which these hostile principles engage in fierce and deadly combat. And upon the issue of that combat to many a man who hears me, may depend nothing less momentous than the salvation of his soul and his place in eternity. There are many who are shielded from coarse forms of outward temptation, and whose passions have never risen up with impetuous fierceness to break the resolution or to mar the purity of their spiritual life. Happy, indeed, are such privileged souls; and yet it may be that their probation still turns upon the question whether or no they will make a sincere act of intellectual submission to the Reason, the Love, of their God. Assuredly the loftiest created intellect may submit to that Reason without degradation; the most blameless soul will need in its day of trial at the bar of Infinite Purity the tenderness of that pardoning Love. A time must quickly come when the struggle which yet waxes fierce will have ceased for ever: when the hopes, and watchwords, and theories, and enterprises which dazzle the eye as it gazes on the busy tangled scene will have passed, with the generation which has projected them, into the silence of eternity. "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the

Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."[1] Beyond the weakness and agony of the last sickness, beyond the darkness and corruption of the grave, there rises the vision of a Throne of judgment and of an everlasting world. Think of it well, brethren, and take your parts. Believe it, there is a submission of thought which is not slavery; and there is a haughty mental independence which, alas, knows itself to be anything but true freedom. They do not really suffer defeat who make their submission to God: they who, while opposing Him, seem to conquer, can win but a perilous and shortlived victory. On this side is Paul, first a persecutor, then an Apostle; and Justin, once a philosopher, then an Apologist and Martyr; and Augustine, who out of a sensualised heretic and freethinker, is raised by divine grace to be a Saint and Doctor of the universal Church. On that side is Julian, Emperor and Apostate, with endowments of character and gifts of intellect so calculated to win our highest interest and admiration; yet ending a reign in which rare accomplishments, and consummate address, and vast political power had been vainly employed against the Gospel with the despairing confession, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilæan."[2]

Life indeed is too short to exhibit the full results of human action; but men frequently anticipate another world with a keen presentiment which is not less than tragical. Assuredly intellect has her rights, her privileges, her duties, her triumphs. Yet faith gazes ever upon a sure inheritance, for which all else, if need be, may well be sacrificed, since all else will one day pass away. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."[3]

[1] Isa. ii. 17. [2] Theod. iii. 25. [3] St. John iii. 16.

SERMON VI.

THE VICTOR IN THE TIMES OF PREPARATION.[1]

Isa. xl. 3.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

ALL the four Evangelists refer these words to the ministry of St. John the Baptist; in St. John they received their highest and complete fulfilment. But their first and historical reference is to the return of the Jewish captives from Babylon. The Lord was the King of the chosen people; and in the vision of the Prophet, the promised return to home and freedom was to be a triumphant procession across the desert, headed by Israel's invisible Monarch. The cause of the holy people was the cause of God; their bondage and shame in Babylon, although a heaven-sent punishment, had been a humiliation for the majesty of Jehovah before the face of the scoffing heathen; their triumphant return would be the work of God, it would also be the manifestation of His glory. No obstacle should stop the path of His resistless advance: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Clearly, my brethren, there is here a wider reach of meaning than any which can be satisfied by the actual

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, March 8, 1867, as part of a course of sermons on Christ as "The Victor in the Conflict."

prospect or history of the return from Babylon. Say what you will about the highly poetical form into which the Prophet has undoubtedly thrown his fervid thought, still there is the thought beneath the form which clothes it. If it would be a degrading mistake to resolve this passage into a mere description of some vast engineering operations; if valleys were not literally to be filled up, and mountains were not literally to be levelled, something, at any rate, was to take place in the moral, social, or political world which should correspond to this vigorous imagery. And that something was to interest, not merely the Jewish race and their heathen neighbours, but the whole human family: "All flesh shall see it together." It is clear that the particular, local, temporal deliverance melts before the eye of the Prophet—as, gazing on it, he describes it—into a deliverance, general and world-wide in its significance, extending in its effects far beyond the limits of time. The Deliverance of deliverances is before him. He sees the great escape from bondage, of which all earlier efforts at freedom were but shadows; he sees it afar off, the pathway of mankind across the desert of time from the city of chains and sorrow, whereof Babylon was the earthly type, to the city of freedom and glory imaged in Jerusalem. And thus it is that the Evangelists so unhesitatingly apply the passage to St. John the Baptist. St. John was, as we Christians know, the immediate forerunner of the Deliverer of humanity; St. John, as a hermit of the desert and preacher of repentance, supplied, by his life, the connecting link between the literal and spiritual senses of the prophecy; St. John, gathered up in himself, embodied and represented the ages of prediction and expectation; he was the mind of the Old Testament in a concrete form, laying down its office and proclaiming its work of preparation finished, when the Reality Which it foreshadowed had come.

Now although, as we were reminded by our Bishop on Ash-Wednesday, it is a fatal error to speak as if the providences and the Being of God were a mere reflection of the wants and thoughts of man; although Redemption is an objective fact, the primary motive of which we may reverently but surely say was the setting forth before the moral universe the glory of the Divine Redeemer; yet still it is true that the Only-begotten Son of God, "for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven." It was not that He modified His original plan by adapting His Incarnation to the necessities of a fallen race. These necessities were foreseen; they entered into, they determined the form of His advent, which thus combined our dearest interests with His highest honour. He came indeed that, even by His deepest humiliations, He might set forth God's attributes of righteousness and love. But He came also at the voice and pleading of our deep necessity; He came to die for all, because, as His Apostle says, all were dead; He came for His own glory indeed, but also because, if He had not come, we must have perished irretrievably.

Accordingly, the preparation for His advent was rather of a character required by our need than essential to His glory or to His personal triumph. It has indeed been said by a great military leader of modern days that the first condition of success in a campaign is the possession of accurate information as to the strength and movements of the enemy. Certainly, the Captain of our salvation was already furnished with all necessary information; He had measured from the depths of His eternity the foe whom He would conquer, and the shame and penalty to which He would submit. But if man is to share in His Victory, man must be prepared for His advent, man must be educated for the blessing in store for him. Unless man is to be redeemed as he was created, without any consent or

co-operation of his will; unless he is to be saved as if, instead of being a moral agent, he were a tree or a stone, man must enter in some measure into the designs of his Benefactor; the way of the Lord must be prepared, the highway of our God must be laid down in the desert of man's moral and intellectual wanderings.

I.

It is plain, my brethren, that our subject is too wide to admit of any but a very partial treatment. Let us then observe that the most necessary element of this preparation for the Victor was to convince man that he needed redemption by a heavenly friend and conqueror. We know that in this country no political measure that really touches the interests of the people can receive the sanction and the force of law, unless the people themselves are convinced that the evils which the measure purposes to remedy are substantial and not fancy evils. No legislative genius on the part of the minister can dispense with this condition of success. If the country is not convinced that the measure is necessary, the minister must take measures that will produce this conviction. He must hold meetings; he must make speeches; he must write dissertations; he must deal in dry statistical demonstrations and in vehemently passionate appeals; he must set in motion all the complicated machinery of political agitation and enterprise which may be at his disposal. Supposing him to be himself satisfied of the necessity of the measure in contemplation, this is nothing more than his duty to his country: he would fail of that duty if he could neglect to diffuse, according to the best of his power, that amount of political information which is necessary to his success.

You will not understand me to be saying that here we have a strict and absolute analogy to the sacred

matter immediately before us; because it is plain that the correspondence fails in a most vital particular. We all know that the enactment of a new law in a free country is, in reality, the act not of the legislature but of the people: the legislature is only the instrument of the popular will. But the Redemption of the world is in no wise the work of redeemed man: Christ is the One Redeemer in Whose redemptive triumph man could have no part save that of accepting and sharing its blessings. Yet this deliberate acceptance of Christ's Redemption by man is of vital necessity to man; man is not saved against or without his will to be saved; and it is therefore of the last importance that he should understand his need of the salvation, which he must desire and accept.

Now what was the evil which Christ was to conquer in man and for man? It was sin. Sin is the one real evil. It is certainly worse than pain, since pain may become a good. It is certainly worse than death, since death is only the effect of sin, and may be the gate of freedom. It is worse even than the devil, since it makes the devil to be what he is. The devil would be powerless, and death would have no sting, and pain would be unknown, if it were not for sin. But sin is not a thing always palpable to and recognised by the sinner. It is like the peculiar atmosphere in which we pass the great part of our lives here in Oxford. Looking down upon our homes from the top of Shotover, we see the thick damp fog burying this city and valley beneath a shroud of unwholesome vapour; but here in the streets of Oxford we scarcely observe it hanging in the sunlight, except when it becomes excessive in the depth of winter. Sin is just such a mist as this: it is a fog, a blight, impalpable yet real, about us, around us, within us. It bathes our moral life on this side and that, and withal it blinds us to the fact of its existence. If man would take a true measure of sin, he

must be lifted out of it; he must ascend to some moral eminence whence its real character will be made plain to him, and where he may form strong resolutions to close with any offer of deliverance and escape from its importunity and thraldom.

Now such an eminence was supplied in early days by the gift of a moral law; and, first of all, let us, like the Apostle, in some passages of his Epistle to the Romans, use that word in its large inclusive sense, for any form of moral truth presented to the soul of man. Of all moral law God is the Author. And moral law was the chosen messenger whom He sent before the face of His blessed Son, to reveal man to himself, and to produce in man a conviction of the need of a Redemption. Of this gift of law there are plainly very various measures. To the heathen He gave the natural law, the law of conscience, the perception that there exists a real distinction between right and wrong, often going hand in hand with grave mistakes as to what was right and what was wrong. And yet still, in a true sense, the Gentiles, although not having the Jewish law, "were a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."[1] To the Jews God gave the gift of law in a form far higher and brighter. The Decalogue was, the Bible says, "written by the finger of God on two tables of stone." It came not from within the consciousness of Moses, it was presented to him from without; although Moses at once recognised, he could not but recognise, its truth. It came from God as an external, independent revelation; it did not gradually arise in one or in many minds by any process of gentle, imperceptible growth; Scripture represents it as having been flashed forth from heaven, suddenly, visibly, amid the rocks of

[1] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Sinai. No law which God had placed in the conscience of any heathen people could compare with the revelation received by Moses; it shed an illumination upon human life, it held up a standard of human action, it implied an idea of the awful sanctity of its Author, with which nothing in heathendom was correspondent.

Undoubtedly, my brethren, the primary purpose of law is, that it should furnish a literal rule of conduct, or, in other words, that it should be obeyed. But if law is not obeyed, it may yet have a use which no wise man will underrate. It may lift up the voice of a perpetual protest against the society which falls short of its requirements, or which violates it, or which is in a fair way to forget it. In this case, instead of being a standard which creates a sense of satisfaction, by being fulfilled, it becomes an ideal, which stands in humbling, because reproachful, contrast to the dull, sluggish life which is so far below it, or which outrages its behests. Now this, according to St. Paul, was a main function of moral law, both Jewish and Gentile, before the coming of Jesus Christ. Even among the heathen, the natural law, which came from the light of conscience, prescribed a standard, which utterly condemned the actual life of the heathen. St. Paul enumerates a long catalogue of sins which the Pagan philosophers knew to be evils, no less certainly than did the Apostle of Christ, but which the Pagans nevertheless continued to practise on an organised system, and in a very business-like way.[1] And although the Jews "made their boast in the law," that is to say, were not merely thankful for possessing so full a revelation of God's will, but compared themselves, self-complacently, with other peoples to whom that revelation had not been made, still, the question was, did they obey it? "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit

[1] Rom. i. 24-32.

adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" To this question one answer only was possible: the Jew "rested" in a law which he did not obey. The revealed Law was his; it was his, not to bless but to condemn him; it was his to convince him that if he had a brighter light to guide him than the Gentile, he also incurred a proportionably deeper guilt by neglecting it. Thus both Jew and Gentile were concluded to be under sin; and in different degrees, it was true that by the law came the knowledge, the blessed salutary knowledge, of such sin.[2] More than this, the presence of the law irritated the activities of that hidden mischief which it revealed. "I had not known sin," says St. Paul, speaking in the name of human nature, "but by the law: for I had not known lust unless the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died. And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."[3] We are not to suppose that the moral law was really creative of evil which did not exist before: since the law comes from a Holy God, and is itself "holy, and just, and good." But although the law did not add to the stock of existing evil, it drew the unsuspected latent sin of man forth into the daylight; it irritated into intense vigour the principle of opposition which, even when dormant, is ever so strong in sinful human nature, and which shows itself, under the irritation, in its true light as sin. The law was like those remedies in medicine which rid us of a disease by bringing it to the surface, or,

[1] Rom. ii. 21-23. [2] Ib. iii. 20. [3] Ib. vii. 7-10.

as we say, by precipitating it; it forced man to see what he really is, and to forget what he had fancied himself to be. "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

This was the function of the law of nature in the Gentile world, and of the law of Sinai, in a much higher degree, in the Jewish world. It was like a light shining in a dark cavern, and the forms of sin around were lighted up by it with a lurid glare, which only did them justice. The graceful wickedness of heathendom, the profound hypocrisies of the Jew, when confronted with this heavenly light, fell into their place. The law tore off the mask; it penetrated beneath the skin; it pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow. It ranged the great palpable sins of the Jew and of the Pagan in their due order of malignity; but it did more than this, it put sin before man in a light which made its burden, as we say in the Communion Service, altogether intolerable.

For what is moral law, viewed in its essence? It is the proper Nature of God, the perfect Moral Being, unfolded in language. This language shows the bearing of God's Nature upon the life of man. The moral law is not an arbitrary code which God might have made otherwise, or might have left unmade altogether. God, being such as He is, could not have made the law otherwise. For God, I repeat, is the Moral Being: He is Love, He is Truth, He is Justice, He is Sanctity. He cannot legislate in contradiction to His Nature; He cannot but express His Nature in His legislation. If He had been a mere all-comprehending Intelligence, a mere all-producing, all-controlling Force, He might have ordered what He has proscribed, and have forbidden what He has commanded. As it is, God's freedom is bounded on this side of His action. God might have made a natural universe very different from that which we behold: the heavenly bodies, this

earth and its tenants, the rocks, the plants, the animals around us are what they are only because He freely willed them to be so. He was under no kind of constraint when He gifted you and me with reason, and denied reason to the quadrupeds and the birds: He might have reversed the order of His gifts; He might have withheld them. But having surrounded Himself with creatures capable of moral action, He could not devise a law which should deny the truth of His own necessary Nature; He could not but legislate as He has. Moral truth, like truths of pure mathematics, is co-eternal with God; it must always have been true that "truth is a virtue," as it must always have been true that "things which are equal to the same are equal to one another." And if moral or mathematical truth is thus co-eternal with God, it cannot be something independent of God, a second, self-existing truth alongside of, and external to, the one original self-existing Being; it must have been, it must be, an integral part of God, a law or element of the Divine Nature. And therefore God could never have said, "Thou mayest bear false witness against thy neighbour; thou mayest commit adultery; thou mayest steal; dishonour thy father and thy mother," any more than He could have said, "Thou mayest have other gods but Me." Given a created moral agent like man, and God cannot but bid man obey the rays of moral truth which stream from His own uncreated Essence. Such rays are the law of an undivided love and homage towards Himself in all its bearings of reverence and worship, the law of honour due to parental authority, the law of reverence for the sanctity of life, the law of responsibility in the transmission of the deposit of life, the law of truth applied to property, and to language, and to the hidden desires of the heart. God would not be God if He could have reversed these commands; the Decalogue is God's Nature veiled beneath

the language, and adapted to the facts of the life of man. And therefore a violation of the moral law is not the setting aside of a capricious order; it is the violation of a law which streams forth necessarily from God's holy Nature, being such as it is; it is a resistance to, a negation of, God's Nature; it is, without any exaggeration, an act or state of will which, if produced indefinitely, would annihilate God.

This may enable us to enter into the meaning of the two words for sin which, both in the Hebrew and the Greek languages, most perfectly unveil its fundamental character. These words call it "a missing the aim or mark," *i.e.* the mark or aim of the life of man. My brethren, what is that aim? In other words, why were we sent into this world at all? Now, if we sincerely believe in a Creator to Whom we owe simply and altogether the gift of existence, must not each one of us answer the question as follows? "I was sent into the world to conform my will to the Will, that is, to the holy Nature of my Maker, so far as I know it. I was not sent here to please myself, but to please the Being Who gave me life. Had I been the unaccountable product of some stray chance, the upshot of some unintelligent force which in its capricious fertility happened to throw off into existence such a singular and complex result as are my body and my soul, although wholly without the consciousness and purpose of doing so, then I might have concluded that I owed nothing to any being but myself, and I might have lived selfishly to enjoy only the fleeting existence which belongs to me. As it is, I believe in a God Who has created and Who owns me; and being thus created and owned by God, being His creature and His property, it is my business, my first and truest business, to live for Him, to bring my will into harmony with His. I am unlike the lower creatures around me, unlike the beasts and the plants,

unlike the forces of nature, the heavenly bodies, the sun and the stars, in that they must of necessity obey Him. But that I might obey Him freely He has enabled and bidden me to love Him. To make room for love there must needs be liberty. The earth incessantly revolves around the sun, but the earth does not love the sun. Why? because liberty is of the essence of love. The earth cannot deviate from her orbit. That I might render to my God the free service of love, He has given me the power of refusing obedience. It is my duty, then, and my happiness to obey a law which is not any arbitrary product of His will, but which results from the essential truth of His Nature. Each deed, each word, each thought which embodies such refusal misses the end for which I exist; it is that unutterable and radical misfortune which I recognise as sin."

Such is the language of a soul which believes in God, and is withal illuminated by moral law. In this high atmosphere of truth the glosses by which sin's true nature is too often disguised slough off and fall away. The soul is in the wilderness listening to the voice which is preparing the way of the Lord before her. In such bracing solitude, face to face with truth, men do not conceive of sin as of a mere external fact, or series of facts, of such and such quantity and bulk, which can be witnessed by the human eye, or felt or measured: sin is seen to be more than this, namely, a posture or warp of the will. In the presence of divine law men do not imagine that sin is limited to violations of human law: since human law does not always enact what is absolute right; and it never pretends to enact all that is right, or to proscribe all that is wrong. Human law rarely enacts more than is necessary for the well-being of society, it does not attempt to legislate for the well-being of individual men. A false and misleading standard in the things of the soul is human

law; it is one thing to keep out of the police-court, it is another to be at peace with God. Taught by the law of God, men do not substitute for the stern, unyielding rule of right and wrong the plastic, varying, untrustworthy standards of "good taste" and "bad taste." No doubt virtue is always really in good taste, and vice is always in the worst taste possible: but this judgment is formed according to an absolute standard of taste which identifies it with moral truth, and not according to that relative and local standard which is "good taste," perhaps, with you and me at this hour, and may be "bad taste" with our successors twenty or thirty years hence. As a matter of fact, stern virtue is often voted by "good taste" to be awkward and graceless, while there are forms of polished ungodliness which "good taste" welcomes, or at least condones. When men understand that the law of God, in its essence, is the Nature of God, they do not think lightly of sin; they do not think of an act of sin as of an act which has no consequences; they do not think of it as of a scar that heals in a few days, or as of a force which spends itself, or as of a colour which fades. They see that wilful sin necessarily empties the soul of God, and leaves it as the bed of the ocean might be without the waters which can fill it. They see that sin introduces a state which does not terminate until it be reversed by an act as definite as the act which introduced it. They see that sin, as being the moral negation of God, is not a fancy of the human mind, but a real fact in the universe, and that to have sinned wilfully is, until a man repents, to be in a state of spiritual death.

Such was the discovery of his moral state to man effected by the presence of moral law. But the moral law did more even than this. It showed man that there was an original warp and deficiency in his nature which made sin welcome, and conformity to moral truth difficult to

him. My brethren, we here touch upon a truth of Revelation which is especially repugnant to some forms of modern thought, and which at first sight may appear to be in conflict with our notions of natural justice. "It is hard," say you, "that I should inherit a sinful nature because my ancestor sinned some six thousand years ago. I will not believe the dogma which tells me this." Very well, you reject the dogma: you make up your mind that you are born holy. But now that you have parted with Revelation, hear what nature tells you. You had, we will say, an intemperate great-grandfather, and he has transmitted to you an enfeebled constitution. You are scrofulous, or you are consumptive, or you have a heart-disease, or you are rheumatic: and this comes to you with the blood you inherit. You may say that your body ought to have been created like your soul, by a separate act of the Creator, which might have detached you from this entail of misery and pain. Still, my brethren, you cannot seriously revise the creation; and it is not common sense to resist unalterable facts. Here Revelation is perfectly at one with nature. Physical evil is transmitted from sire to son; and a like transmission of forfeiture of moral good is equally certain. It is plain that God deals with us men, partly as individuals, but partly also as one great family, I had almost said as one vast organism, with laws, wants, privileges, of its own. Certainly the sin which Adam transmitted was not anything positive, such as a poison, or bad blood. When Adam sinned, he forfeited that original righteousness, that robe of grace and beauty with which his Creator's mercy had endowed him in Paradise, and he simply could not bequeath what he himself had lost. But as the gift of righteousness which he had forfeited left his natural passions in rebellion, and his faculties dislocated and deranged, so he passed on to his children a nature thus enfeebled and disordered, and open

to the solicitations of evil, and disinclined for goodness. It was in mercy, not in judgment, that he was still permitted to transmit the gift of natural life. God would not deny to millions the gift of life because the sin of an ancestor brought with it an inheritance of weakness and of shame. From the first God gave a promise of coming salvation. But still man felt his weakness, he felt his inherited degradation, the ruins of his earlier greatness survived in his intellect and in his heart to tell the tale: and when the moral law cast its clear, bright light upon his conscience, a David exclaimed not merely, "I acknowledge my own fault, and my sin is ever before me," but also, "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me."[1]

Thus it was that among the most gifted race of the ancient world there was observable in poetry and generally in art a vein of deep melancholy, which faintly confessed inward misery, and yearnings for a blessing which had once been promised. Nature herself was in sympathy with man; death was an inexplicable mystery in the world of the All-merciful; the whole creation groaned and travailed in pain together.[2] The great mystery of pain, which is not solved in our chemical laboratories and museums, hung heavily on the thought of the ancient world. Paganism, too, had its sense of violated right, and its wild attempts at expiatory sacrifice; and, under a higher sanction, the courts of the tabernacle and of the temple reeked with the blood of victims, ever reminding the people of the covenant that they bore an accumulating load of sin of which they could not discharge themselves. Prophets reiterated, expanded, enforced the teaching of the lawgiver; they gave it sharpness of point and particularity of application, thus stimulating into keener consciousness the national and individual sense of sin.

[1] Ps. li. 3, 5.

[2] Rom. viii. 22.

Psalmists poured forth strains of penitence which pierce the souls of all who have felt the presence of moral evil within them, even in Christendom, revealing as they do, the majesty and the searching convicting power of the divine law. This was its function: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." But it discovered what it could not relieve; it quickened anxieties which it could not allay; it generated hopes and yearnings which it could not satisfy. It taught men that there is a divine life, but it did not give them strength to lead it; it furnished mankind with an ideal, but it left the ideal high out of human reach. In the presence of law man knew what he ought to be; he knew that he was not what he ought to be; he yearned for a pardon which should free him from guilt, and for a strength which should lead him heavenward. The law, said St. Paul, is like a Greek slave who leads his master's children down to the school of the teacher who will instruct them, but the slave has done his work when he has left them at the door. The law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.[1]

II.

Therefore the discovery of man's deep need was accompanied by another discovery, the revelation of a Deliverance. The hopes of man are as ancient as his despondency. At the gates of Eden was given the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.[2] We interpret that promise, and rightly enough, in the light of its fulfilment. But when it was given it might have seemed vague, and capable of many interpretations; nothing was certain from it except that man's deliverance would in some way be wrought out through humanity itself. Around this promise all the faith and hope of the earliest ages gathered, and from this point prophecy gradually

[1] Gal. iii. 24. [2] Gen. iii. 15.

narrows and becomes definite as it proceeds to unfold its true interpretation, until at length, when Isaiah and Zechariah had spoken, the whole life and sufferings of Jesus Christ had been written by anticipation. To Noah it was revealed that the promise would be realised among the posterity of Shem; it was then still further narrowed to the descendants of Abraham. Here we encounter the selection of a peculiar people, who were to be privileged, not for their own sakes, but for that of the human race at large: "In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed." When Jacob foretells the coming Shiloh, it appears plainly that the deliverance is to spring from a single tribe, nay, more, from a single person. When Balaam speaks of the star of Jacob and of the sceptre rising out of Israel, we see that the Object of his vision will have the glory and power of a monarch. Moses himself predicts a Prophet to Whom Israel will hearken; a coming Teacher, not an order of teachers, Who will reveal the Mind of God with a truth and fulness unknown before. But it is in the age of David that these scattered rays of hope are brought into a focus. There we meet first of all with the limitation of the promise to David's family; next, with the sacred name Messiah, so pregnant with meaning and with hope; thirdly, with the guarantee of an endless kingdom, such as no merely human descendant of David could have been supposed to inherit. In these prophecies the hopes of the world are sometimes commingled with the more immediate hopes of Israel; a human king is in the foreground of the prediction, and yet the prediction contains much which would be applicable to no earthly monarch. Here we encounter the two aspects of the life of Messiah—His life of humiliation and suffering, and His life of exaltation and glory. Each of these is described with great particularity. One psalm is a picture of Christ triumphing over the rebellious heathen, another of His victory over

death, another of His sufferings upon the cross eventuating in the conversion of the world, another of His mediatorial reign of glory. The Davidical outline, if it can with justice be called an outline, is filled up by the later prophets. Isaiah describes Messiah's supernatural Birth, the features of His ministerial action, the long line of titles, divine and human, which reveal His Natures and His office, the details of His humiliation and sufferings. Daniel determines the exact period of His coming, and the character of His kingdom; Zechariah anticipates even minute incidents of the history of the Passion; Malachi closes the Jewish canon with a prediction of His forerunner.

In so vast a field we must limit ourselves, and I would press upon your attention this one observation as being in harmony with the present course of sermons, and as being altogether borne out by the facts of the prophetical literature:—the coming Christ of prophecy is always a conqueror. So patent, indeed, is this note of victory in the prophetic utterances respecting Him, that the Jews materialised it in accordance with their political hopes, and expected a military leader who would defeat the armies and rival the empire of Rome. The Jews were fatally wrong in this perversion of the promises which they had inherited; their eyes were blinded by their political passions. and accordingly they missed the true Deliverer when He came. But they were right in laying emphasis on the victoriousness of the Messiah, though His victory was not to be won by material force. In prophecy Christ is pre-eminently the Victor; He conquers ignorance as a teacher, or He conquers sin as an example, or as a victim; He conquers moral rebellion from a heavenly throne; He conquers death in the chambers of the dead. It is sin, sin in itself, sin in its consequences, over which He triumphs; the iniquity of us all is laid

upon Him, yet "He shall see His seed and prolong His days." He is not more victorious in the prophecy of Daniel, when He is brought to the Ancient of Days, and there is given to Him a throne and dominion, and a kingdom, than He is in the twenty-second Psalm or in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, when He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied, and when all the kingdoms of the nations, converted by His self-sacrificing love, worship the true God. Prophecy, in short, is one long hymn in His honour, and it salutes Him across the abyss of intervening centuries as the Hope of humanity advancing to achieve its freedom. "Thou art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are Thy lips, because God hath blessed Thee for ever. Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty, according to Thy worship and renown. Good luck have Thou with Thine honour. Ride on, because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things."[1]

Brethren, have we—have you and I—any true part, at this moment, in that victory of the Conqueror, which the moral law led man to yearn for, and which is the theme of prophecy? Surely here is a question for Lent. Lent should be to us something more than a name in the Calendar. Lent is no mere fancy observance of serious and old-fashioned Churchmen, who live by their Prayer-book; no mere relic of the thought and feeling of a bygone age. It is rooted in the moral needs of human nature; it speaks to every thinking man; it recalls us to the consideration of undying truths. It speaks of truths which, certainly, we never should forget, but of which it is well that we should be periodically and solemnly reminded. "Strip off," it says to each of us, "the disguise which hides thee from thy real self; and dare to look thy

[1] Ps. xlv. 3-5.

God in the face. One day thou wilt die; thou wilt pass into another world alone. Art thou now what thou wouldest be then? Dismiss fancy standards of goodness, and look higher and deeper for the measure of thy life. Cease to move in a vicious circle of morals, even as thou wouldest not knowingly reason in a vicious circle of argument. Cease to judge thyself by a self-made measure; cease to legislate when thou shouldest be standing at the bar of judgment. Dare to meet the law of moral truth. Thou art not a Pagan, that thou shouldest be judged by the twilight of thy natural conscience: thou art not a Jew, that thou shouldest read thy acquittal or thy condemnation in the two tables of stone. Thou art a Christian: Christ's Cross was traced once upon thy forehead: Christ's Creed and Law have sounded in thine ears, and been confessed by thy lips: nay, Christ's Nature has been given thee, whether thou retainest, or hast lost, that gift of gifts. Thou art a Christian: and as a Christian thou must be judged, thou must judge thyself, by a standard which Pagan and Jew knew not. The Sermon on the Mount, the law of love and of sacrifice—this, this only, is thy positive standard. Thou art not by rights a slave, grudgingly yielding the stinted meed of service which just escapes punishment: thou art by inheritance a son, upon whom a generous Spirit of freedom has descended, that thou mayest obey the law, not of bondage, but of liberty. The fruits of that Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law of reproach and condemnation. Before thou canst bear these fruits thy lower nature must be trodden down and killed. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. This is the standard of the conqueror of sin: is it thine?"

Is it so, my brother, that thou hidest thy face, and wouldest fain sink to the very dust for fear and shame?

Is it so, that not in the New Testament merely, but in the Decalogue, not in the Decalogue alone, but in the light of thy natural conscience, thou tracest the sin of Judah written with a "pen of iron and with the point of a diamond"? Dost thou hear the sentence which Eternal Justice must needs utter against thyself? Canst thou only tremblingly murmur: "The enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit vexed within me, and my heart within me is desolate:" "Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice"? Then take heart, for it is well with thee; thou, too, art ready for the advent, or rather for the return of thy Lord as conqueror of thy spiritual enemies. There would be but little hope for thee, if thou wert still dreaming of thy personal excellence: as it is, thou knowest that thou art "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Cease, then, from thy despondency: He, thy Redeemer, calleth thee. If thou wilt, He is ready not merely to forgive the guilty past, but to bid thee rise with Him to newness of life. Ask, and it shall be given thee: seek, and thou shalt find. His Cross and Wounds, His words of pardon, His robe of righteousness, His Sacraments of grace and power, are within thy grasp. He hath not given thee over unto death; thou shalt not die but live, and declare the works of thy conquering Lord.

SERMON VII.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GIFT OF REVELATION.[1]

St. John xii. 47, 48.

And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

THESE words form part of that last appeal to the Jewish people with which, according to St. John's account, our Lord's public ministry was closed. The raising of Lazarus and the entry into Jerusalem had precipitated that final condition of popular feeling towards Jesus which enabled the Sanhedrin to bring about His condemnation and death. On the one hand, "although Jesus had done so many miracles among them, yet the mass of the people did not believe in Him." On the other, "among the chief rulers many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." To this little coterie of timid half-believers our Lord observes that to believe on Him is to believe on the Father, that to see Him is to see the Father; thus implying that, to refuse to honour and acknowledge Him was to dishonour and to disown the Father. To the larger unbelieving public, He proclaims the general law of responsibility for contact with truth. "If any man hear My words and believe not, I judge him not. . . . He that rejecteth Me,

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on the First Friday in Lent, February 28, 1868.

and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

Remark the distinction which our Lord seemingly draws between Himself and the word which He speaks to men. Our Lord is the world's Saviour; yet His message is, cannot but be, its judge. It is not that our Lord contradicts Himself; He will really "come in His glory and all His holy Angels with Him, and then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He will separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats."[1] He is not denying that "the Father hath given all judgment unto the Son;"[2] but He is explaining the principle upon which He will administer this judgment. An Oriental despot condemns or absolves according to personal tastes, caprices, preferences, dislikes; he administers not a law, but his own personal will. An English judge condemns or absolves in obedience to the law of the land whose servant he is: his duty is limited to ascertaining its real sense, and whether a particular case does or does not fall under its sentence. Now our Lord teaches the Jews that they will be judged hereafter, not as they might suppose by personal caprice, but by the fiat of inexorable law. It is true that in our Lord's case there is really no room for the distinction between the administration of a law and the giving effect to a personal will, since with Him the two absolutely coincide. His personal Will is the law of eternal truth and right. But He presents the subject to us in this way in order to enlighten and deepen our sense of responsibility. The truth which He has proclaimed among men is to be their real judge; it will sit upon the great white throne; it will be robed in the features, and proclaimed by the lips, of

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 31, 32. [2] St. John v. 22.

Christ; it will be the measure of men's bliss or the measure of their failure; it will utter the tremendous words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

The responsibility which is incurred by contact with truth is a subject which runs through the whole of Holy Scripture. Of some books of the Bible it forms the ground-thought, the leading idea. Thus the main object of the Book of Deuteronomy, which we are reading just now in the daily lessons, is to represent as vividly and as forcibly as might be to the mind of Israel that vast responsibility which devolved upon it as the peculiar and selected people, to whose custody God had committed the priceless treasure of the Sinaitic revelation. Thus the main practical object of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to remind a Christian Church which was tempted to lapse into Judaism of the moral impossibilities of renewing the once enlightened who had fallen away, of the danger of practically counting the Blood of the covenant wherewith Christians are sanctified an unholy thing, and of thus doing despite to the Spirit of Grace, of the hopelessness of escape "if we neglect so great salvation." And man's responsibility for the receipt of truth is the burden directly or indirectly of most of our Lord's recorded teaching. It is a lesson conveyed by many of His parables, as by the Sower, the Talents, the Treasure hid in the field, the wishes of the lost Dives on behalf of his five brethren. It is the burden of His denunciation of the Pharisees; they knew a higher truth than they acted upon. It is to guide Apostles in their ministry, bidding them shake off the dust from their feet against cities that will not receive them, warning them not to cast pearls before swine. It determines the woe pronounced against Capernaum, against Chorazin and Bethsaida; Tyre and Sidon, pagan as they were, would certainly have repented

had they witnessed the works which were wrought in Galilee. It furnishes the motive pleaded by Jesus in the prayer which He uttered on behalf of all who took part in His death: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

That a revelation of truth hidden from our natural faculties has been given by God is the belief of Christendom. It is impossible to say that God could not give, or that man could not receive such a revelation. That God would give it, is a presumption which naturally occurs to those who believe Him to be a Moral Being, and who have considered at all seriously the real wants of man. That He has given it is proved, partly by the varied correspondence of the Christian faith to the deepest wants of our nature, partly by such facts as miracles and unfulfilled prophecy, which are at once historically certain and strictly supernatural. And what this final revelation is, is no secret reserved for the privileged few; its deepest verities are on the lips of every child who can say the Creed, or who can read the New Testament.

Now any one who looks attentively at what is being said and done around us, will see that here in England the minds of men are disposed towards Revelation in three different ways. We leave out of account the multitudes of our great cities who have, alas! no mental relations towards it, since they are practically heathen. But of those who are not ignorant that a Revelation is asserted to have been intrusted to the Church of Christ, some are indifferent to the subject; others are distinctly hostile to its claim to be a real Revelation; while others are, with whatever degree of sincerity, believers. All the various shades of human feeling which bear upon religion fall under one of these main divisions. All the remarks which we hear in conversation, all the disquisitions that we read in newspapers, and reviews, and folios, all the

secret thoughts of men that circle in the busy hive of souls around us, are ultimately reducible to one of these three relations—indifference, hostility, acceptance or submission. Let us consider briefly what aspects of human responsibility are suggested by each variety.

I.

We are confronted first of all by a great mass of indifference to religious truth. By indifference I do not mean all listlessness on the subject of religion. There is indifference and there is indifference; there is the indifference of ignorance and the indifference of knowledge. Or rather the listlessness of ignorance ought not to be branded as properly indifference. When a man has never been brought into contact with truth, he has no relations towards it, and therefore not the specific relation of indifference. The callousness or contemptuousness which the heathen or the very ignorant may exhibit on spiritual subjects, is far less criminal than the indifference of Christendom, if indeed it be properly a crime at all; for it has never had the advantages which are apparently required in order to produce genuine indifference. A thick tradition of darkness, the growth of generations of vice and error, has settled down upon the multitudes whose case I am considering; nature and conscience have scarcely been permitted even for one moment to whisper their lessons and their protests; the nascent aspirations of the soul have been appropriated to the worship of some odious fetich, or have been at once killed back to the ordinary level of a life of consistent animalism. Let us leave these and such as these in the hands of the All-Merciful, not without a prayer that His Name may be better known upon the earth, not without a pang of self-reproach at the little which we have done for that Name and for our fellow-creatures. Whatever

be the seriousness and anxieties of their case, at least they have not enjoyed a position which has enabled them really to cultivate indifference to the beauty and to the claims of revealed truth.

Genuine indifference is like those creatures which are only brought to light by the presence of a costly material which they foul and spoil. It requires a great opportunity, nothing less than a Divine Revelation. It is a famous specimen of the *corruptio optimi*. It corresponds in spiritual things to the darker enormities of advanced material civilisations; which could never have taken place, nay, could not have been devised, in primitive conditions of society. It is the growth of Christian climes, the hideous parasite which fastens itself upon generations which inherit the faith and love of the Christian centuries. It is found, in monstrous exuberance, among nations and in families which are eminently Christian. It must, forsooth, first stand in the very presence of Christ, that it may rise to the full proportions of its high-handed independence both of His Person and His Work. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

Indifference is sometimes deliberate, sometimes not. Thus there is the indifference of some public men and journalists, who consider religion an admirable supplement to the police, as being well calculated to reconcile the poor to their lot in life, and to furnish them with motives for sober living, but who would not think of wasting time upon the inquiry whether religion affects themselves. Another form of indifference is that which assumes in an off-hand style that no one of the positive religions of the world is even likely to be true. It therefore advises all men, Moslems, Pagans, or Christians, to follow the religions in which they have been born, not as being

true, but as being in their way, and containing perhaps a certain measure of relative as distinct from absolute truth. Then there is a very common form of indifference, which, admitting the Christian Revelation in general terms, professes to decide that while this or that doctrine is essential and fundamental, a third and fourth, resting upon precisely the same authority, is a matter of no consequence whatever. All of these kinds of indifference are in reality varieties of one great disease—a failure to see what is really due to the proved or even to the asserted presence and claims of a Revelation from God.

Indifference to Revelation as a whole is too common to be treated as extraordinary. Yet in itself it is sufficiently surprising. Think what is man's position in this world. At best he has a few short years of life—threescore and ten. If man were here an eternally existent being; if he had perfect command of all the forces around him; if his gold or his chemistry could ensure for him a perpetual youth,—indifference to the revelation of a state of life beyond his sight would be less surprising. But, left to himself, man stands face to face with one great certainty, surrounded by uncertainties of the most anxious description. The one certainty is death: "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Face to face with death, man preserves his instinct, his sense of immortality; but to what will that immortality introduce him? Left to himself, man's future is darkness, a darkness which is only broken by the lurid lights of his terrified imagination. This being the case, Revelation presents herself as unveiling the unknown future, in the name and with the authority of God. She proclaims that the Author of the universe has really broken its silence; that His Mind is expressed in human words; that it is possible to ascertain exactly the meaning of what He has said; that beyond death there is the

judgment, and heaven and hell; and that on this side of death there is the conflict with sin, and the Cross of Christ, and the light and strength of the Spirit, and the resources of prayer, and the power of the Sacraments. Yet, in presence of this announcement, men are indifferent. They are passing through life; they are passing from youth to manhood, and from manhood to old age; they rise daily betimes in the morning, and they late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness; they are intelligent, enterprising, industrious, and, as regards a vast variety of questions which are bounded by the horizon of time, they are thoughtful. Yet, standing face to face with the great proclamation of God's Life and Love which is made by Christendom, "they will not be learned nor understand, but walk on still in darkness." It is the mystery of a moral paralysis: "The heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted, and I should heal them."[1]

How much of the thought, how much of the writing, how much of the conversation of our day, are but disguised echoes of the perpetual colloquy between the claims of Revelation and the spirit of indifference? Let us listen to the accents of that never-ceasing dialogue, with which all are more or less familiar, in which indifference, fatigued by the presence of an importunate visitor, endeavours to silence her by a feint of argument and remonstrance.

Revelation begins with God. "There is one Being," she says, "Who is unlike all else; Who is above all else; Who is the Author of their existence to all besides Himself; Who upholds all around Him in the life which He has given them; Who can neither be enriched nor

[1] St. Matt. xiii. 15.

impoverished; Who is alone perfectly holy, adorable, blessed; Who is eternal Self-existence, eternal Thought, eternal Love, Three yet One, the Almighty, All-wise, All-loving God." And indifference rejoins: "That is a large and intricate speculation; the problems which it raises are very numerous; they have no sufficiently practical interest for me."

Revelation continues: "This glorious Being is the tender and loving Father of men; He has created mankind in a special sense for Himself. Man is so fashioned that he can only find the true rest and satisfaction of his being in God. This is the real secret of human destiny; this is the true key to, and interpretation of, all human yearnings and aspirations. And this gracious God is within reach of His creatures: to know Him, to love Him, to commune with Him, is the highest, nay, it is the true privilege of intelligent life." And indifference languidly observes: "That is a mystical view of existence; it is rather overstrained; it is fanciful: I do not care to engage in a tissue of reveries."

Revelation rejoins: "Unless man reaches this higher life, it were better not to have lived at all. Apart from union with the Blessed God, life is a hideous nightmare. And left to himself, man cannot reach that union. Man is fallen; he has been bruised and wounded; he has lapsed into self-caused misery and ruin. Yet the eternal Love broods over the creature even in its degradation; and the Divine and Everlasting Son has laid aside His glory; He has been born as an Infant; He has died upon the Cross. His precious Blood still avails to wipe out all the foulest impurities; His life-giving grace still has power to restore His servants to the image of the Holy One." And indifference mutters: "Is not that notion of the fall and of sin rather morbid; and would not a more moderate view of human shortcomings be able

to dispense with the offering of so costly an atonement?"

Revelation continues: "At least, O man, thou must die; and thou carriest within thyself the secret of thy immortality. Thou canst not kill out every hope, every fear within thee, that tells of a future to which I have the key. Thou canst not utterly give the lie to that implanted sense of right and wrong, which points to a law, to a lawgiver, and to a throne of judgment. At least consider the great Hereafter—that Hereafter which I proclaim to be necessarily one endless wail of agony or one rapture of endless bliss." And indifference smiles its stupid or its cynical smile. "There would be something in your appeal," it says, "if you Christians were all agreed; but while you are engaged in an endless series of controversies among yourselves, sensible people may be content to keep their judgments in suspense, and to listen to your theories of the future without disquietude."

Such is indifference in the presence of Revelation. It would seem almost earnest as it brandishes its appeal to the divisions of Christendom, in the face of the Love of God, speaking to it in the Church and from the Bible. Yet it forgets that, however mournful and sinful these divisions are, they are as far as possible removed from justifying indifference. They are so many affirmations, however mistaken in their particular forms, of one supreme truth—the paramount importance of religion. However much Christians may differ among themselves, they are at least all agreed as to the preliminary fact that a Revelation from God does exist, and that to know as much about it as possible is a matter of vital necessity for man. In truth, the objections of indifference are not the language of men in earnest, but of men who are languidly fencing against the importunities of an unwelcome subject. They are like the pleas which almost

benumbed travellers are said sometimes to have urged in favour of lying down in the snow to sleep and to die, when some friend has insisted upon the certain danger, and has entreated them at any cost to keep moving on. To indifference, the constant proclamation by the Church of Christ of the good news revealed from heaven, is at best but as an antiquated poetry, or as "the sound of one that has a pleasant voice and can play well upon an instrument." Despite the rapid onward rush of time, despite the voices of love and warning and menace that sound around it, indifference sits in utter unconcern, as if balancing itself in sport over the brink of eternity, and wondering in a languid way what might possibly come of it, if perchance it should lose its footing.

Depend upon it, my brethren, if time, and money, and speech, and thought, and position, and influence, are things for which a moral being like man must give account, that account must be given more fully, more searchingly for contact with the gift of gifts — the revealed truth of God. Most of us, indeed, have been cradled in it, more or less nursed and fed by it, from our youth up. But even to have met truth on our path in life once, once only, is to have entered on a new set of moral circumstances. It is to have passed from the condition of Tyre and Sidon to the condition of Chorazin and Bethsaida. It is to have ceased to be in the sight of Eternal Justice what we were, and to have become something that we were not. To have met truth is to have met one who cannot henceforth desert us for ever if she would, and who, if we suffer her not to aid and cheer us like the strong and tender friend that she is, will nevertheless not altogether leave us, even though she be driven for the present from our sight with quiet contempt and scorn, or with open violence and outrage. It is to have met one towards whom we may, alas! come to feel as

towards a personal enemy, who dogs our steps through life, unveiling the well-known features at each crisis of difficulty and of sorrow, and who rises before us at the last with the stern visage and accents of an unwelcome phantom, to reproach us for not being what we might have been, to judge us for being what we are. For truth will sit in judgment, not simply on the throne of the universe, but on a private tribunal erected by conscience in the sanctuary of each single soul. If Christ were not coming visibly to judge us from the clouds of heaven, conscience would invest His spoken word with a judicial power; conscience would robe His message of loving-kindness and mercy in the habiliments of justice; conscience would wring from her reluctant Judge the irreversible sentence, the sentence of the spoken word, upon those who have heard it, when the day of attention, and acceptance, and obedience has passed away.

Awake, then, thou that sleepest the sleep of indifference: arise! Indifference is a levity against which the solemnities of life and death utter their perpetual protest. Thou must look Revelation in the face; thou must give heed to a voice which speaks in the name of the Author of thy being; thou canst not for ever ignore the one subject which should ever have the deepest interest for thinking men; thou must in the name of reason and prudence, no less than in that of natural piety, banish the spirit of indifference with a "Get thee behind me, Satan."

II.

When a man ceases to be indifferent on the subject of Revelation, it is possible enough that he may become *hostile*. And in one sense hostility is better than indifference. It has more moral nerve; it is, in its way, earnest; and it thus promises better for the future. For it implies at least interest in, and attention directed

towards, its object. It may be much more vexatious and bitter than indifference in its dealings with Christians, yet withal nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven. Saul of Tarsus, when breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, was already on the eve of his Conversion.

And here let me at once say what is always unpopular, but is nevertheless true, that in a Christian country hostility to Revelation is more frequently than not of moral origin, albeit disguised in an intellectual dress. By this I do not mean that all who reject Christianity have committed enormous crimes, or that all who accept it are high-minded and pure. But if a man is living in one known sin, to which he clings, and which Christianity tells him will shut him out from God's presence hereafter, he has a powerful motive for wishing the Gospel to be untrue. The will has a subtle but strong purchase over the understanding in matters of belief: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light," not because the light has less to be said for it than darkness, "but lest his deeds should be reproved." Accordingly, as a matter of fact, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light"—again, I say, not because darkness is intellectually more respectable than light, but —"because their deeds are evil." This does not merely apply to men who are in the habit of committing, and who love to commit, great offences which are condemned by the conventional standard of society. The principle is of much wider application; it applies to states of mind which we condone habitually in ourselves and others, and which, nevertheless, have a most powerful share in determining our attitude towards Revelation.

(*a.*) Consider, for instance, the general state of mind which is produced by affluent circumstances in the middle

and upper classes of English society, at least during the early and middle years of life, while health is still unimpaired, and friends have not yet begun their long procession to the tomb. This state of mind is one of sincere satisfaction with this world just as it is; with its masses of poverty and suffering at the base of the social pyramid; and with a well-to-do class at the top, where life is curtained and pillowed in all the products of a high material civilisation. This satisfaction is not thankfulness to God expressing itself in active forms of charity; it is the tranquil sense of material comfort which would on no account be disturbed, either by the thought of the present care of others, or by the prospect of its own future unsettlement and collapse.

Now to such a state of mind the eternal future is not a welcome thought. Hell, of course, is out of the question; and fresh from our drawing-rooms, and our theatres, and, it may be, our casinos, we read our Histories of Civilisation, or our Histories of Rationalism in Europe, with sympathy and admiration, and pronounce hell a phantom which belongs to barbarous ages when men loved torture for its own sake, and were burnt for witchcraft. Even heaven is not so certainly welcome, since the ascertained accounts of heaven do not tally accurately with our conceptions of a really enjoyable, that is to say, a materialised existence. That repose in perpetual adoration of the Source of Light and Love seems tame and dull beside our round of excitements stimulated by and lavished upon created things; and in our secret hearts we prefer our present well-to-do life of comfort to the Paradise of the Bible. Thus wealth clogs all the finer spiritual sensibilities of the soul, and you see men, as the Psalmist says, whose hearts are "as fat as brawn," literally so cased and padded in the things of this life as to have lost altogether their sense of the supernatural.

It was said by a great economist, Richard Cobden, of whom his countrymen, and all Christians, must ever speak with respect, whether or not they agree with his political opinions: "Sir, when I go to church, there is one prayer which I say with my whole soul, 'In all time of our wealth, good Lord, deliver us!'" Ay! we have much reason to pray that prayer. "Deliver us from the quiet selfishness, deliver us from the grosser temptations, but deliver us, above all, from the blinding, numbing, paralysing power of easy circumstances, which make death and the great realities beyond it an unwelcome thought." If a man would deal fairly with revealed truth, he must at least enfranchise his will from slavery to the material. How solemnly does the voice of the great Apostle break in upon the tenor of our easy, comfortable existence: "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."[1]

(*β.*) A second mental habit which makes men hostile to Revelation is personal vanity. There is the vanity which refuses that original act of submission to God, without which faith cannot exist. And there is the commoner form of vanity, which turns Revelation into conversational capital. A man belongs, for instance, to a family in which the names of God and Christ have been honoured by the piety of generations, and are still honoured by his nearest relatives. How easy to make a reputation for independent thought! A few smart sayings about the Pentateuch gathered from the last sceptical writer, a few witticisms at the expense of the

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

holy men who are held up to our reverence in the Bible, a few imposing, perhaps not very solid, generalisations about the laws by which religions are said to grow into shape and to attain a world-wide authority,—these constitute the stock-in-trade of the domestic Celsus or Porphyry of the nineteenth century. In the absence of any sufficient check, they go a great way to produce the impression which he desires to create—the impression that he is an independent thinker upon religious questions, and that his thought is upon the whole adverse to Revelation. It may be that when he begins to talk he does not exactly mean all that he says; but he talks himself into unbelief by a process which, alas! is only too easy. He is obliged to say strong things in order to create the desired impression about his independence, and in time he gets to believe the strong things which he says; they are indented upon his mind by the mere force and vehemence of constant repetition. Thus his hostility to Revelation is, in truth, not of intellectual so much as of moral origin; he has done truth an injustice, and he gets unconsciously to dislike what he has wronged. And his real fault has been a defective sense of responsibility. He has to feel that this talk on solemn subjects is a matter for which he will have to answer; that he will have to answer for talking in such a sense at all, and especially for talking, as is most probably the case, on the strength of very imperfect information.

(γ.) Then, again, there is sometimes the want of sufficient firmness and courage, especially in a place like this. Some men drift into a state of mind hostile to, or at any rate prejudiced against, religious truth, simply under the pressure of self-confident and brilliant declamation. They hear first one doctrine argued down, as they think completely, and then another. They are, perhaps, victims of the fallacy of many questions. They are thus

beaten back from point to point, and they lose their faith by a piecemeal process. And it is, of course, much easier, as Hooker long ago remarked, to attack truth than to defend truth. A few sharp and incisive epigrams, which make a lodgment for themselves in the memory, are easily uttered—epigrams against orthodoxy in general, epigrams against the power of the Sacraments, epigrams against the efficacy of prayer, epigrams against the work of the Holy Spirit and the atoning virtue of Christ's Death, epigrams against the authority of Scripture, epigrams against the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, epigrams against the existence of God. Nothing is easier of production than sayings of this kind, and they leave a sting even when they do not represent an argument. And those who hear them are distinctly responsible for making head, if I may so speak, against a pressure which has no real right to influence conviction. It is especially important, in these days, that those who would assail our faith in detail, should be forced to say how much of positive truth they themselves admit as certain. If they admit nothing, they plainly are not in a position to enter upon the question at all. If they admit only a few elemental truths, they admit enough to enable you to put them on the defensive. For so strict and close is the interconnection of truth with truth, that their scant admissions may easily furnish the premisses of the truths which their epigrams would condemn. And those who can do so, in a firm yet humble spirit, are responsible for at least making good their position against these fugitive assailants.

If, then, a man is careful to endeavour by God's help to clear out of his way the moral difficulties which impede belief in our Lord and His Gospel, he will find that the purely intellectual ones are much more easily disposed of. Thus a perfectly humble man will be saved

from making many mental mistakes. He will not think of assuming that there must be no difficulties in God's revelation of Himself to His creature; that God, if He is seen at all by the soul, must be seen all round; that there must be no clouds and darkness round about Him. He will not make his own thoughts about, and feelings towards, truth the measure of truth itself. He will remember that Revelation rests upon the authority of God, and is independent of the thoughts of men about it, even though it was at first given through human minds. He will feel in modern language that Revelation is objectively true, whether he realises it subjectively or not.

One great cause of hostility to Revelation is that the mental temper of a large number of persons in our day is eminently and exclusively subjective. Each man makes his own thought the measure of all things. Each admits truth only so far as truth is in harmony with his personal idiosyncrasies. Truth is only to be true upon the condition that it is felt. Christ may be present in His Sacrament, if He is felt to be present; not else. Scripture may be inspired, if you can feel the glow of its inspiration; not else. The Holy Spirit may sanctify, if you can measure and map out the exact track of His influence; not else. Jesus Christ may be Divine, if, as you survey His human character, you can feel His Divine majesty; not else. God may be what you desire Him to be; He may be Benevolence without justice, Wisdom or Power without liberty of action, a Providence dealing with general laws, yet not a Providence taking account of each hair of the head and of each sparrow that falls to the ground. The subjective spirit indeed does not receive God as He has revealed Himself. It remodels Him; it makes its own god. You only know what it means by God when you have examined the particular mind which names Him. The subjective temper accepts this attribute

and rejects that; it admires this dispensation, and it is dissatisfied with that; it can approve of one doctrine, but it takes exception against another. It is checked by no sense of impropriety or grotesqueness; it is hampered by no suspicion that it is perpetually engaged in a work to which it is necessarily unequal. It is in truth dealing all along with its own human impressions, not with Divine realities; and it talks, appropriately enough, not about religious *truth* but about religious *views*. It goes on its way, offering its kaleidoscope of ever-changing views as a substitute for that glorious creed which was once for all delivered to the saints; and it ends—in another European country it may be said wellnigh to have ended—in that deep pit of materialism, where the belief in invisible truth is killed out altogether.

Now this habit of mind must disappear when a man has realised the moral bearings of his own place in the universe. The faith is easy of acceptance when man believes that God is the Centre of the intellectual universe, and that he himself is but an atom, moving in an infinitely distant orbit around the Sun which lightens and attracts it. The faith is difficult when self is regarded in good faith as the sun and centre of all things; while God, or rather a nebulous view about God, along with views and theories many about things and persons divine and human, move around this central self. Such a habit of mind is not an intellectual curiosity so much as a moral fault; it disappears when the moral atmosphere has been purified by the quickened sense of responsibility. I do not say that no intellectual difficulties will remain when moral errors have been abandoned—far from it. Difficulties are only what we might expect in a religion which, like Christianity, mounts to the very throne of God, and embraces in its sacred writings the earliest annals of man, and penetrates into all the departments

of human life and interest. But these difficulties, if not explained by patient study, will be reasonably set aside when due weight is allowed to the immense presumptions in favour of a Revelation, and to the actual evidence that one has been given. We *can* believe, if we are not predisposed morally against belief. This is one reason why faith is made so much of in the New Testament; it is a test of our moral fidelity to natural light. And for nothing are we more responsible than for the duty of preparing the way of the Lord in the soul by making a clean sweep of all those dispositions which indispose us to receive Him.

III.

The third relation in which men stand toward revealed truth is that of acceptance and submission. Many of yourselves, my brethren, have by God's grace "embraced from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you." But does your responsibility end here—with the mere act of acceptance? Does it not rather assume proportions of the gravest and most momentous kind? Surely, unless the talent of truth may lie safely idle; surely, unless the warnings of Revelation itself are to be a dead letter; it is certain that those who have received it are responsible for at least three distinct forms of effort with regard to it.

(*a.*) We are responsible, first of all, for *thinking* much about it.

It is not unnecessary to say this. Some Christians hold the faith in a very superficial way, with the very tips of their fingers—as if it were a matter of phrase and form rather than of spirit and life. They receive it indeed as a precious possession, and then they put it aside, very respectfully, high up on a shelf in their minds. Now and then they take it down, once a week, just to see that it is there; now and then some vagrant bandit, in

the mere wantonness of destructive enterprise, tries to take it from them, and they defend it at least with obstinate courage. But they treat it rather as if it were a precious curiosity than as a loved and revered friend. And therefore when they talk about it, they use a few set phrases which they have learned up, and beyond the precincts of which they do not venture. Of the truth which these phrases guard they have no real living hold: they do not see with their mental eye its strength or its beauty, or the interdependence of its several parts, the necessity of each portion to the whole, the vital force which runs through it, and which carries with it the assurance of a final and world-wide victory. They are not in any sense at home with it; and the consequence is, that when unbelievers or half-believers hear these Christians talk about religion, they get an impression that Christians do little else than manipulate a set of phrases which they do not understand, and that "orthodoxy" is a matter which belongs rather to propriety of expression than to energetic spiritual life.

One reason, brethren, is that we are not sufficiently alive to our responsibilities to truth. For instance, as a generation we are not earnest students of Scripture; few of us have that keen interest in it which was universal in the ancient Church, when its several books could only be procured in manuscript and with some considerable difficulty. We have such abundant opportunities of studying it that we might almost seem to despise them; just as those who live in Oxford often neglect to see chapels and libraries which strangers from the antipodes study with the keenest interest; just as the wealthy will often profess themselves weary of the very sight of luxuries which are the envy of the poor. But when at the judgment-seat of Christ we stand face to face with the generations to whom a manuscript of Scripture was

a possession infinitely more precious than the masterpiece of a great painter would be to ourselves, and who felt that no amount of time and labour was misspent in the effort to understand it; nay, when we stand face to face with the millions who in this country earn their daily bread by hard toil, and it may be sharp suffering, and to many of whom a few fragments of time devoted to the study of the words of Christ appear in the light of a rare and almost priceless luxury;—how shall we answer for the use we have made of our vast and varied opportunities? "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." How truly, how severely, if so it be, that we have not even roused ourselves to ascertain its meaning!

Another reason of our superficial hold on truth is, that we Christians do not meditate. Many men only think of meditation as if it were a dreamy, listless process, unworthy of those who, as men and as Christians, have a serious work to do in life. But meditation is not Tityrus lying at ease under the shade of a wide-spreading beech-tree; it is David, hunted for his life, yet deliberately pausing ever and anon to contemplate and to praise the Divine attributes of Justice and Mercy; it is St. Paul, spending three years as a solitary recluse in the Arabian desert, that he may be nerved with a Divine strength for the conversion of the world and for his martyrdom; it is St. John, an exile and a prisoner for the name and patience of Jesus, reading in the opened heavens the coming history of the Church. Meditation is an intense act of the whole soul moving forth to welcome and to embrace truth; it is intelligence marking out the exact limits and range of truth; it is affection embracing truth for the sake of its fair and matchless beauty; it is will, sternly resolving to express truth in act and life. Meditation to be of real service ought to be just as regular and systematic as prayer; and when this is so, each of the great doctrines of

the faith, each of the acts, and sayings, and sufferings of our blessed Lord, each of the means of grace, become to the soul familiar things, and not, most assuredly, despised or thought lightly of, because familiar. Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour of meditation each day is not much for a Christian to give to God; but the man who gives even this, knows by experience at the end of a year that he has thus acquired quite a new grasp and sight of revealed truth. He sees how impossible it is to add to it, how yet more impossible to mutilate it. Between it and all other thought there is in his mind the sharpest line of demarcation. Scripture is no longer a dead letter to him, but a "living creature;" he sees in Scripture, not a mere collection of documents relating to a distant time, to events and to states of mind which have passed away, but the perpetual Voice and Mind of One with Whom his soul holds constant communion, and in Whose light he traces with clear eye the certainty and the symmetry of the faith.

(*β.*) We are responsible, too, for *propagating* the faith.

This duty is not a specialty of certain societies, or of missionaries, or of clergymen. It belongs to Christians as Christians. If a Christian believes with the Apostles of Christ that there is "none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," he cannot, as a humane as well as a sincere man, refrain from making efforts to spread that Name among his fellow-creatures. He will not be daunted either by vulgar denunciations against proselytism, or by the sneers which are so often levelled against the efforts of our missionary societies. Their efforts may be in many ways feeble and unsatisfactory; but the cause which they represent is one as to which no Christian can dare to be indifferent. If his faith be not self-communicative, it is already paralysed, dying or dead. How indeed could it be otherwise than self-communicative? How can a man seriously believe

that he has been bought from sin and death by the priceless Blood of the Eternal Son, that he is sanctified and quickened by His Spirit and His Sacraments, that he has access to the Father through a union with the Son, effected by the Spirit,—how can he look forward with tranquil thankfulness to death, and with a good hope, if not without awe, to judgment, and yet not desire to communicate these blessings to his fellow-creatures? An absence of interest in the spiritual state of those around us, or of the heathen, is a certain proof that we ourselves have no vital hold upon the great truths of Redemption. Holding those truths, we owe the communication of them, as opportunity may arise, to others — to servants, to friends, to relations, to the poor, to the heathen, to all who know them not, yet who, like ourselves, have to encounter life and death. Thus we too are "debtors both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the philosophers and to the unwise." We are not indeed to throw Divine pearls before human swine; but the fear of doing this may be reasonably and rightly entertained, while yet it leaves us more opportunities than we can use for making God's way "known upon the earth and His saving health among all nations." Ah! "we believe the faith," it has been said, "when we are willing to die for it." If Christ our Lord, compassionating our weakness, does not ask our blood, at least He has a right to our time, to our money, to our efforts, to our interest, to our prayers.

(γ.) Above all, if I may so speak, we are responsible for *living* the faith.

Who of us that knows himself truly, or that knows even some measure of truth about himself, must not feel keen pain and shame when he reflects on this department of his Christian responsibility? Who of us must not feel that there is some justice (at least *some*) in the vaunt of the opponents of Christ, that while Christians make pro-

fession of a high and unearthly creed, they live very much like everybody else—self-seeking or aimless lives, with no mark of the Cross, no Print of the Nails visible upon them? Nay more, is it so, that while Christ's Name is on our lips, our hearts are given to that which He has for ever condemned, and which, He has told us, must shut men out from His presence for ever? Are we "conformed to this world," or have we been "transformed by the renewing of our minds"? Do we "live after the flesh," or do we "by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body"? Is our life that of men who have "put off the old man with his deeds, and who have put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"? Do we "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts"? Is this systematic crucifixion of our evil inclinations at least as real a business with us as keeping our accounts and making our way in life? Is prayer, and all that bears on it, a matter of interest as keen and enduring as the course of public events, or daily occupations and amusements? Do we consider what it is to live in a lost world as the family and representatives of our crucified Lord? In short, do we in any sense "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called"? Are we "doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves"?

Brethren, if it is worth our while to be Christians at all, it is worth our while to be Christians in downright earnest. Nothing is gained either in this world or in the next by being a half-Christian, who believes in those fragments of the creed which are not rejected by the irreligious opinion of the day, and who selects for practice certain duties and precepts which do not inconvenience him. In this supreme concern, as in all lesser concerns, it is simple prudence to be thoroughgoing—"to bring every thought into the obedience of Christ"—to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is our reasonable service." It has been said that if Christians led Christian lives, the world would be converted in spite of itself in the course of a few years. And certainly the most formidable opponents of Christ our Lord are not the arguments and sneers of His intellectual adversaries, nor yet the gigantic sins of those who own no allegiance to Him. His worst foes are they of His own household, who, by their sins and inconsistencies, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

"The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." It will judge our indifference; it will judge our prejudices and our rejection of light; it will judge our inconsistencies. If we have never been real students of Holy Scripture—if we have never meditated before—let us begin this Lent. Let us set apart a fixed period of time daily for the study of the Mind of God in Holy Scripture. If we have never done anything to spread Christ's Name among our fellow-creatures, let us begin this Lent. If we have never brought our lives into something like harmony with the law and spirit of Jesus Christ, let us begin this Lent. If we have never repented of soul-destroying sins, let us repent this Lent. Let us begin, while yet we may, while the word of Christ, speaking in the Gospel, speaking in the Church, is still our friend and guide. One day that word will judge us; it judges us already even now. Let us think, if not of this present judgment, at least of that last award, and take our parts. Let us think of it as the goal to which hour by hour we are moving onwards, face to face with an ever-accumulating weight of responsibility for known truth; let us think of it as that which may be to us, through our Saviour's mercy, if we will, not the dreaded knell of doom, but the first tidings of the dawn of the eternal morning.

SERMON VIII.

JONAH.[1]

JONAH i. 10.

Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

WHEN we take up the Book of Jonah, that which strikes us first of all as lying upon the very surface of the book is the degree in which miracle pervades the whole narrative. In this respect the book is unlike any other among the minor Prophets. Zechariah's earlier prophecies take the form of a series of visions; Jonah's is a history of wonders patent to sense. Jonah thus seems to belong less to the minor Prophets than to the narratives of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha, preserved in the historical books of the Old Testament. His life is a tissue of preternatural occurrences. "Nothing is impossible with God," observes a clever sceptical commentator, "and hence Jonah lives in the belly of the sea-fish without being suffocated; hence the Palm springs up during the night to such a height that it overshadows a man in a sitting posture. As Jehovah bends everything in the world to His own purposes at pleasure, these marvellous coincidences of his book had nothing in them to astonish the Author. The lot falls upon the right man; the tempest rises most opportunely, and is allayed at the

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on Wednesday, March 3, 1869, as part of the Oxford Lent course.

proper time; and the fish is ready at hand to swallow Jonah and vomit him out again. So, again, the tree is ready to sprout up, the worm to kill it, and the burning wind to make its loss perceptible."[1]

Between commentators of this temper and the writer of the Sacred Book the real difference is, that the Scripture writer believes seriously in a living God, and—I must say it, reluctantly but distinctly—the commentator does not. The Scripture writer certainly takes it for granted that He Who made and Who rules the world, is not precluded from acting on it and in it by any iron laws which fetter His liberty; and that to control creatures and events is not more difficult for Him than to have given them being. Whereas in the mind of the commentator, the dead abstraction which he calls God is the slave of the living, sensible reality which he names Nature; or rather Nature forms a screen between human life and God, which keeps God very effectively at a distance, and surrounds man with agencies and laws, supposed to do their work like a self-moving clock, and upon whose motion a living Omnipotent Will is never suffered to innovate. For the writers of Holy Scripture miracle is always possible, and the only question is whether there is sufficient evidence for asserting its existence in a particular case. For writers like this commentator miracle is always impossible, and the only question is, how most easily to get over the authority and statements of Scripture on the subject. Beyond all doubt the Book of Jonah does raise this question as directly as any book in the Bible; perhaps more so. Although the preservation of Jonah in the belly of the sea-fish, and the growth of the *Palma Christi* to a sufficient height to overshadow a sitting man, have well-attested analogies in nature which go to make the possi-

[1] Hitzig, Einl., qu. by Keil, Einleitung in das Buch. Jon., Biblisch. Comm.

bility of such miracles at least conceivable[1] even to the most purely naturalistic imagination; yet the whole narrative is instinct with the presence of a Living, All-governing God, Who makes the material world subserve the moral, and Who acts through the lower creatures on the souls of man. In the early ages of Christianity the Book of Jonah was appropriately ridiculed by the heathen Lucian; and in one of his Epistles St. Augustine combats the faintheartedness of some Christian believers who were disposed on this point to wince at hearing of jests current among the pagans. The virtual substance and upshot of St. Augustine's remarks is this, that a man either believes in the Resurrection of Christ or he does not. If he does not, he is not a Christian, at least in any sense known to the New Testament. If he does, he believes in a stupendous miracle which ought to make it logically impossible for him to take exception at other well-attested miracles, such as that of Jonah's sojourn in the belly of the sea-fish.[2] The question is thus in reality a wider and deeper one than any connected with this particular book; and the history of Jonah will be respected and believed by those who are not prepared to make short work with the most solemn and important portions of the Gospel narratives. For our Lord Himself attests the truth of Jonah's history, and makes it a sign or warrant of the miracle which was to prove His own mission to the world: "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, even so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Thus much upon a question which could not be entirely passed by, but which we may here brush out of the way of this evening's proper subject. To his own age, doubt-

[1] Keil, Einl. and *in loc.*

[2] Ep. 106, qu. by Dr. Pusey, "Minor Prophets," Introd. to Jonah.

less, not less than to ours, Jonah's life was an announcement of the presence and power of the Living God in this His own world, which is the work of His Hands, and which most assuredly He has not deserted. But besides this, there are two messages which are spoken to our age and to all from the pages of this book; one of them concerning the love and large-heartedness of God, the other the history of a human soul, which is by no means singular in the moral aspects of its agitated destiny.

I.

This will appear if we follow a while the guidance of the history, and accordingly begin by asking the question, why Jonah was sent to Nineveh?

"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me."[1]

This commission, it has been observed, was in keeping with God's ordinary providence respecting heathen nations.[2] God always blessed those of the heathen who were brought into contact with His chosen people by a certain knowledge of Himself. The Egyptian kings and people learnt much of Him from Joseph in one generation, and from Moses in another. The Canaanites heard of Him from the Spies; the Philistines by the capture of the Sacred Ark; the Phœnicians on the Mediterranean coast through Hiram of Tyre; the Syrians of Damascus through captives like Naaman's servant and the miracles of Elisha; the Babylonian and Persian kings through Daniel, and the Persians later through Esther. The truth which was already "the glory of God's people Israel," was, in a measure, "a light to lighten the Gentiles." The Synagogue anticipated some features of the Gospel, as

[1] Jonah i. 1, 2. [2] Pusey, "Minor Prophets," p. 247.

the Church has incorporated and will always retain certain elements of the Law. It is true now that Christians are, in the Apostle's words, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."[1] It was true, then, that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."[2] The laws of the Divine Government are invariable; only in one age prominence is given to one law or principle, in another to another.

Jonah was sent to Nineveh in the meridian of Assyrian greatness. Two monarchs had just died whose reigns had been a succession of victories. Pul, or Ivalush, the first assailant of Israel, was yet to come. Nineveh was great both in its extent and in its power. The circuit of its walls was sixty miles; and although within the large area thus enclosed, as at Babylon, there would have been a considerable acreage of ground under cultivation,—and there is an allusion in this very book to the vast quantities of cattle herded there,—the population of the city was at least 600,000. If, among European capitals, it could not compare as to population with Paris, much less with London; Nineveh must have equalled, if it did not exceed, Berlin or St. Petersburg. Nineveh was a city in which human nature was brutalised by a long career of successful violence; brutalised to a point which degraded it even below the average heathen level. The Prophet Nahum finds the natural image which will do justice to its moral characteristics only in the lions' den: Nineveh, he says, "is the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding-place of the young lions, where the lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses."[3] Nineveh was the home of rapacity, injustice, violence, cruelty, conducted on a truly imperial scale; and God, speaking to Jonah, says, "Their

[1] 1 St. Pet. ii. 9. [2] Acts x. 34, 35. [3] Nah. ii. 11, 12.

wickedness is come up before Me." God is brought before us in these words, as He sits above this waterflood of crime, as He remaineth in the moral world a King for ever. He is the Great Judge unseen by man, but witnessing all human acts and words and motives, seated even now upon His Throne of Judgment; and each crime of each member of that vast community mounts upwards, and is registered in His Heavenly Court.[1] The same phrase had already been used of the murder of Abel, and of the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrha; it marks that special notice of sin which precedes a judgment. God had waited long in His Patience and His Mercy, but the cup at length was full to overflowing. The great city of the East must perish; and yet, only forty days before the appointed day of ruin, a voice of warning should reach it, proclaiming the justice yet implying the tenderness of God.

Of that message of mercy Jonah was to be the bearer. Other prophets might prophesy the future conversion of the heathen to the True God, following upon the surrender of Israel to the heathen power, and upon the appearance and Death of the Messiah; Jonah was to anticipate the Gospel in another way. Jonah's book contains no predictions of the remote future in words; although we know from another source that he did foretell the restoration of the borders of Israel by Jeroboam II.[2] He was, like the Baptist, to be a preacher of repentance, who roused men by warning them of the coming judgments of God. He was to be an Apostle of the Gentiles before the days of Jesus Christ; a prophet of Israel who was to witness by the great work of his life against the notion that particular peoples and races could have no part in the living God. By going to Nineveh he was to inflict upon the reluctant imagina-

[1] See Pusey *in loc.* [2] 2 Kings xiv. 25.

tion of his countrymen the truth that "God will have all men to be saved;" he was to break down the barriers which were supposed to restrain the Divine Mercy within the frontiers of Israel.

His book witnesses to this truth in other ways besides his mission to Nineveh.

What a picture is that of the heathen sailors, of their awe at the presence of a Divine Power in the storm, of their tender and humane consideration for the Hebrew Prophet, of their earnestness in worshipping the idol deities whom alone they knew, and all this leading up to their final conversion to the true God!

What a moral miracle; how magnificent in itself; how great in its significance and bearing on the future of the world is the conversion of Nineveh in the sequel at the Prophet's Voice! For a single day a foreign prophet announces in the streets of Nineveh the coming judgments, and the whole city turns in repentance to God. When we consider the resistance which one human will can offer to the influences of God's grace, and multiply such resistance by the numbers of a vast Asiatic capital, we see that this is really a miracle compared with which the prophet's preservation in the sea-fish is altogether insignificant; since the irrational creature would have opposed no resistance whatever to the will of its Creator. It was wrought not among Jews but Gentiles; and our Lord referred to the heathen Ninevites as an example to, and a condemnation of, the men of His day. "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a Greater than Jonas is here."

This was, indeed, a foretaste of the Blessed Gospel. To us it seems a simple truth, the capacity of all human beings for salvation, through the knowledge and grace of

our God and Saviour. But it was a truth dimly discerned of old; and only brought home in the long-run to the conscience of man, by a long tale of sufferings and blood. Are we Christians quite sure that we have really conquered it? Up to the French Revolution, if not since, there was in the French Pyrenees a race of men known as the Cagots. They were said to be descendants of the Arian Goths; but for many centuries they had renounced their error; they believed and worshipped exactly as their neighbours. Yet to this day you may see in the old Pyrenæan churches the small door by which they alone entered and left the aisle assigned to them; the yard where they alone were buried; the lane or street which they alone inhabited; the stream or well of water which supplied them alone, since to touch it were, in the opinion of their neighbours, downright pollution. Admitted to share the highest spiritual privileges, they were practically treated as a race accursed; they were shunned as the enemies of God and man. The spiritual fellowship which could not be denied them did but make the social ban by which they were oppressed more marked and hateful. There are no Cagots among us in England. Be it so; but are there no proofs of the same temper as that which proscribed this outcast class? Is not the human heart much the same in England as in France, now as in the last century, and for the matter of that, as it was in Palestine in the days of Jonah? Certainly our Lord has since then stretched out His arms upon the Cross, that He might embrace the world within the compass of His Redemptive Love; but the language which is still to be heard among us about African races, and the practical value of missions, and even about European nations and our Irish fellow-countrymen, and some kindred subjects, shows how little we have understood Him.

II.

We pass to the next point—Jonah's conduct upon receiving the Divine command.

What was Jonah's exact moral position?

Jonah *knew* that God had spoken to him. How the word of the Lord came to him we know not. We only know that it so came to him that he could not doubt whose word it was. There is a phrase used in the Old Testament not unfrequently, "It was said unto" such and such a prophet "*by* the word of the Lord." The rendering should be "*in* the word of the Lord." This phrase seems to represent the "word of the Lord" as an atmosphere of kindling holy thought, a sphere of spiritual truth encompassing the prophet, illuminating and moving his whole soul, and finally taking shape in language of exhortation, or prediction, or teaching, or resolve, as the case might be. So it may have been with Jonah. We know nothing of events which may have preceded this heavenly inspiration. We know not whether his natural tastes, or capacities, or antecedents, whether travel, or friendships, or any like circumstances, led the way. The prophet tells us nothing to satisfy mere curiosity: every word of his book has a moral and spiritual drift. We only know that however it came to him, it was really a message from heaven which came to him, and that he knew it to be so.

This suggests a most interesting and solemn truth. Every human being, be he prophet or layman, has a definite work, some one definite work to do in this world before he dies. It is a work which he alone is fitted by God to do: his stock of strength, of thought, of feeling, of general capacity, his endowments of character, his friendships, his most instinctive and unconscious

movements, all have a bearing on it. Others may be in many ways very superior to him; others may be wonderfully like him; but no other human being can fitly take the place assigned to him in the Divine Predestination. "For this cause have I raised thee up," is the motto which points to the crisis, when he will come face to face, in all his liberty, and in all his weakness, with the call to his predestined work. His Nineveh may be, in the eyes of the world, in his own judgment, altogether beyond his powers. It may be, as he imagines, so insignificant as to be quite beneath them. But his responsibility, his danger, his glorious opportunity, are in either case the same, when he stands confronted with the duty which beyond all others was designed for him by the Creator Who gave him life. We only learn the real interest of our own or of other men's lives, when the idea, the possibility of discovering and following out their providential purpose has dawned upon us.

How did Jonah receive the commission which God gave him? "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

What is the state of mind which this implies? Jonah knew God's Will, but he did not welcome it. Why did he not welcome it?

Was it that God commanded exertions from which his constitutional indolence shrank? This has often been taken for granted. But the history discountenances it. They who fly from hard work do not, with their eyes open, undertake exertions which are at least as great as those they would avoid. In those days a voyage along the whole course of the almost unknown Mediterranean was a more serious effort than a journey, familiar enough to an Eastern imagination, by routes which, comparatively, were well frequented across the desert to the great Asiatic capital.

Was it, then, fear? Did Jonah shrink from the violence of those fierce and brutal heathen to whom he was sent? Certainly not. His later history, and, indeed, his conduct on board the ship of Tarshish, shows that he had that perfect confidence in God's protecting Hand which makes fear impossible. He had no real continuing fear even in the belly of the sea-fish: "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto Thee into Thine Holy Temple."[1]

What, then, was Jonah's motive for disobedience? He himself tells us that it was a private theory of his own; it was, in fact, a misguided patriotism. When upon their repentance afterwards God pardoned the Ninevites, Jonah, as he tells us, was very angry: "And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray Thee, O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil."[2] Jonah had no doubt of God's mercy; he feared lest God's mercy should be shown to those whom he knew to be the enemies of his country. He knew that Assyria would be the scourge of Israel, and he therefore wished that the sins of Assyria might draw down upon it a speedy vengeance such as should disable it for purposes of aggression. If he obeyed the command of God, and denounced against Nineveh the coming judgments; God, he knew, was so tender towards all signs of repentance, especially in those who had had scanty opportunities, that He probably would not fulfil the judgments after all. Let Nineveh, then, be left to itself, to its vast ever-increasing body of sin, to its sure inheritance of coming wrath; and let Israel—the people of the Lord, the country

[1] Jonah ii. 7. [2] Ib. iv. 2.

of the Prophet—be spared from anxiety and peril in the years to come.

Patriotism, my brethren, is a natural instinct, which Revelation has, at least indirectly, sanctioned. As our family, so our country is God's gift; and the instinctive love of country, like that of near relatives, which every good man should feel, is His gift also. But neither the love of family nor country is God's best gift to man; and it may happen that a stronger and holier passion than either, namely, the love of God Himself, will, under certain circumstances, demand a serious sacrifice on the part of these lower affections. We ought, indeed, before we sacrifice them, to be very sure that some subtle form of selfishness is not playing us a trick; and that it *is* the love of God, and not of something much lower than He, and perhaps very unlike Him, which exacts the offering. But Abraham had had such an assurance, and it was his glory to have obeyed it, tender parent as he was;[1] Jonah had such an assurance, but in Jonah the Jewish patriot, watching anxiously for the signs of the political horizon, was stronger than the Prophet and guide of men listening only for the commands of the Most High. No doubt, in Jonah's case, the natural sentiment of patriotism was reinforced by the religious feeling of the Israelite in favour of the privileges of the Covenant people: as a theocrat not less than as a patriot, Jonah would leave Nineveh to its fate. But this was, in Jonah, a sin against the light. Prophet as he was, he knew God's Mind; opened partly in earlier ages; opening yet more distinctly in his own; opened at last with indisputable clearness to his own soul,—respecting the Gentile races. He knew that they were to have a share in the Heart of God.

The peasantry around his village home on the hills

[1] Gen. xxii. 16, 17.

of Zabulon might naturally and rightly feel as he did. But then Jonah was not a simple peasant, but a Prophet to boot; and he could not, if he would, act with only a peasant's light and a peasant's responsibilities. It was not for him to reflect popular prejudice when he ought to be guiding it; and he might have known from the history of his country that in the end the best patriot is not the man who lends himself to the political passion of the age or of the hour, but he who, at whatever cost and beyond all else, serves his God.

Can we Christians say that, with the love of the Incarnation around us, we have always remembered that in the Body of Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond or free, since all are one in Christ Jesus?[1] Has this conviction availed to stop the bloody wars which have desolated Christendom, and the real reasons for which have continually been of the most earthly kind? Have we constantly acted on that precept of our Divine Master which bids His followers, in person or by deputy, go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?[2] Enough has been said of those ancient British Bishops who are reported to have been unwilling to convert the Saxon enemies of their race to the Faith of Christ, lest conversion should save them from a punishment which their barbarities deserved. But what shall we say of the policy both of France and England in Eastern Europe at this very moment, which from jealousy of another Christian power condemns twelve millions of Christians to enslavement beneath the yoke of the Infidel? What of the principle of our old Indian rule, which for so many years discouraged Christian missions in the interests of commerce; or of a war with China,

[1] Col. iii. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Rom. x. 12; Gal. iii. 28, v. 6; Eph. vi. 8.
[2] St. Mark xvi. 15.

undertaken with the object of forcing upon that country a demoralising traffic which even its heathen conscience condemned? If Christians can thus forget themselves and their Lord, let us not marvel at the Israelite Prophet, who had solid reasons for his error, the very shadow of which has been taken from us.

Jonah rose up;—he could not sit still. He could not go on quietly in his village home as if nothing had happened to him; as if he was morally in exactly the same state as that in which he had been before the word of the Lord bade him go to Nineveh. If he did not obey God, he must do something else; he must get out of God's way, or if that were impossible, he must try to forget Him. "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

Here let us guard against a grave misunderstanding. Jonah did not suppose that he could literally escape from the presence of God. He did not suppose that there were corners in the universe, still less in the inhabited globe, from which the Presence and Power of its Maker is excluded. Such a conception was natural, it may be, to the heathen, with their many gods, presiding, like human governors, or patrons, over territorial districts assigned to them by the imaginations of men,—districts beyond the limits of which they had no real jurisdiction, and could therefore be set at defiance with more or less prospect of impunity. But Jonah knew that God is everywhere by the necessity of His Nature. A localised Deity would be no good at all to a soul which had once looked the Incomprehensible in the face. The devotional language of Israel was ever the same: "Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I go from Thy Presence? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there: if I go down to hell, Thou art there also: if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the

sea, even there shall Thy Hand lead me, and Thy right Hand shall hold me."[1] And Jonah's prayer, embodying as it does so much of the Psalter, alone shows that he was not ignorant of a truth, which was indeed as elementary in the creed of a Jewish believer as it is in that of a Christian.

The words "from the presence of the Lord" should be rendered "from being before the Lord." It was not God's inevitable and encompassing Presence, but his own sense of standing before Him as His servant and minister, from which Jonah fled. Distinguish between God's actual, matter-of-fact, unseen, but all-encompassing presence, and our personal sense of it. From the first escape is impossible; from the last it is, alas! only too easy. What Jonah wanted was a distraction, which should relieve him from the sense of duty which belonged to his prophet-conscience, from those scruples which the mistaken patriot within him would fain have crushed. He would change the mental and spiritual atmosphere; he would turn his back on a country where all that met the eye spoke of the power and reality of the Sinaitic Revelation; he would interest himself in human life, under other and different aspects; the language, the commerce, the customs, if not the religion of the Spanish seaport, might give a turn to his thoughts which would enable him to forget the past. So he "went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; and he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from being before the Lord."[2]

My brethren, Tarshish and the Phœnician trading-vessel belong to a civilisation which has long been buried out of sight. But the human soul remains at this hour true to its old instincts and to its oft-repeated history. We still hear the Divine summons to hard or unwelcome

[1] Ps. cxxxix. 7-10. [2] Jonah i. 3.

duty; and there are modern methods of flight unto Tarshish from being before the Lord, which do at least as well as the Phœnician trader. A change of friends, a change of habits, a change of literary occupations may suffice. Tarshish is near enough to all of us to make it easy for us to forget our duties to Nineveh.

III.

Enough has been already said on the preternatural aspects of the judgment which overtook Jonah. Morally speaking, it brings before us three great truths. First, God's mercy in not leaving Jonah to himself. The storm was sent in love rather than in justice. If Jonah had been a reprobate, he would probably have reached Tarshish in perfect safety, after a very favourable voyage. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." When we have done a deliberately wrong act, entangling and blinding the conscience, and giving to the whole moral being a false direction, the best thing that can happen to us is a heavy judgment,—some mighty tempest in the sea of life,—which rouses conscience into activity, and makes any effort or sacrifice welcome, if only thereby the past may be retraced.

Secondly, Jonah acquiesces in, nay, he dictates the terms of his own punishment. He was not dragged over the ship's sides against his will. The storm had spoken not to his physical fear, but to his conscience; his conscience was lashed into an agony which rendered him indifferent to the surging fury of the waves. He had to pass through a humiliating yet most healthful punishment, which they only can suffer who stand in some position of superiority towards their fellow-men. When little children remark misconduct or inconsistency

in their parents, or servants in their master, or laymen in their clergyman; the words which express in the speaker a genuine embarrassment are felt by the hearer to convey, however unconsciously, the severest censure. "Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this?"[1] The sincere wonder of the poor heathen inflicts upon the prophet of the Divine Will a rebuke which they do not even suspect. Jonah had just told them, "I am an Hebrew: and I fear the Lord the God of heaven, Which hath made the sea and the dry land."[2] Their words express the distressed amazement which was produced by comparing the Prophet's profession of faith with his actual practice. If he really believed in such a God as this, how could he dare to disobey Him? It is the inconsistency of believers which is the wonder of those who believe not, and the worst enemy of the Faith. It is the patent and inexplicable inconsistency of professing to believe in the Eternal Son of God, Incarnate and Crucified for the sins of men, and then of living, as our consciences tell us many of us do live, in utter practical forgetfulness of this Powerful and Loving Saviour. Much is said, and truly, in these days, of the increased boldness and earnestness of infidelity in attacking the fundamental truths of Christianity: and there never was a time when scepticism had at its command so much ability, so many literary organs, so large and imposing an array of distinguished names, in England, as the present. But of this let us Christians be sure;—that when unbelief has said its last and bitterest word against the Person and Authority of our Divine Lord, it has done much less towards deposing Him from His rightful Throne in the hearts of men, than we individually can do, may I not add, have done, by our practical disloyalty to our own convictions, by the broken,

[1] Jonah i. 10. [2] Ib. i. 9.

halting, inconsistent service which, at the best, we render Him. Jonah felt something like this as to his narrower creed; and when the heathen sailors asked him for guidance, he uttered the sentence of his own punishment: "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea: so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this tempest is come upon you."[1]

Thirdly, Jonah's punishment brought with it an opportunity, which most of God's judgments in this world do offer us, and of which he made the most. The belly of the sea-fish was a retreat, from which the world was excluded. In it Jonah was driven back upon himself and the One Being, Who is like self, in being never really absent from any among us. Instead of occupying himself with plans for escape, or abandoning himself to despair, Jonah returned to God, from Whose presence he had fled, in earnest communion. He did not invent new prayers; but he fell back upon Psalms which already enriched the devotions of Israel, and with which he had long been familiar. They said all that he wanted and more; just as a few inspired words have before now fed the soul of a dying Christian for weeks or months without being exhausted. And thus Jonah was emptied for the time of his waywardness, and was at length restored to a liberty which he at once devoted to God's Will. "Then the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah." "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh."[2]

IV.

The lessons of a history like Jonah's may easily be misapplied. Many cases may occur in modern life which seem to be parallel, but are not so in reality. There is one feature of Jonah's case which ought to be kept steadily in

[1] Jonah i. 12.

[2] Ib. ii. 10; iii. 3.

view, in order to prevent such misapplications; and that is, the fact that he was himself personally convinced, and upon sufficient grounds, that God had spoken to him, and desired him to go to Nineveh.

This fact seems to be lost sight of in a class of cases, to which Scriptural examples, like Jonah, are not unfrequently applied, as sanctions. I mean cases in which, without the opportunity or the disposition to examine the questions really at issue, persons are tempted to join the Roman Catholic Church. There have been, of course, many instances, of which we all have heard or known, in which after thought, and prayer, and study, persons have come to the conclusion that it is their duty to become Roman Catholics. Now, while as English Churchmen we cannot but think them wrong, either as to their facts, or at least as to the inferences they draw from such facts, or in both respects; it is not to such cases as these that what I am going to say applies. In a larger number of cases men and women who are disposed to become Roman Catholics do not really study any one of the questions at issue; and the force which impels them towards Rome is rather an unthinking impulse than a conviction. This impulse is probably made up of several ingredients; partly of a natural taste for art or organisation; partly of the love of change as such, which enters so largely into all our natures; partly of a notion that in the Roman Church it would be possible to make a new spiritual start, and do better than had been done in the Church of England: partly of a strong affection for some friend who has taken the step in past years, and who is anxious to enlist recruits for his new communion. Under the pressure of this strong composite impulse a man meets with a Roman Catholic; who, as a matter of course, tells him that this impulse is itself a Divine Grace, drawing him sensibly towards the kingdom of the Truth, and that to resist it is perilous.

"You are Jonah," the Roman Catholic says to him in effect, "and you are bound to make a sacrifice and to obey the truth, at the cost of going to Nineveh. If you take your own course, if you resist this impulse which is upon you, you are really taking the road to Tarshish; and if you are not to be lost altogether, the best thing that can happen to you is some terrible judgment which will bring you to your senses."

In minds of a certain order, this kind of inaccurate appeal to Scripture supersedes the necessity of further argument. They are keenly—not too keenly—alive to the reality of God's guiding and sustaining grace; they are fearful—not too fearful—of grieving His Holy Spirit; but they are not sufficiently accurate to observe the fallacy which underlies such a use of Holy Scripture. That fallacy consists in the assumption that the path of duty is really as clear to themselves as it was to the Hebrew Prophet. Jonah had no doubt about—no reason for doubting—God's Will that he should go to Nineveh; there was no real room for argument in the matter; he resisted what he knew to be a direct Divine command on the strength of a private, and chiefly political view or prejudice. But in the case before us, the question whether God does command a man to join the Church of Rome is the very point at issue. The mere existence of a strong impulse in the direction of Rome does not decide this point any more than the existence of a strong impulse in a very opposite direction proves the truth of Calvinism or of Socinianism. Before the impulse can be treated as a grace, or as anything but a disturbing and misleading force, which ought to be expelled and excluded from the soul as quickly as may be, the rectitude of the course of action towards which the impulse leads should be satisfactorily established. In Jonah's case this was done; but in the case before us, it has not yet been done. No

English Churchman can satisfy himself that it is a duty to become a Roman Catholic until he has at least satisfied himself of two points. First, he must be sure that the Church of England *is not*—I do not say, a perfect representative in all respects of the Primitive Church of Christ (few men of adequate information and honesty would assert that she is)—but that she is not—a portion of Christ's Body at all; that she is a dead branch of a Divine Tree, or a mere piece of State-contrivance. Secondly, he must satisfy himself that the Roman Catholic Church *is* —I do not say, a part of the Church of Christ, with errors and shortcomings, and also with blessings all her own (she is that beyond all doubt),—but that she *alone* is—the Holy Body; that she *alone* on earth represents, and that she represents adequately, to this generation, the fair form and pure countenance and unsullied soul of the Church of the Apostles. If a man says that he has been able to overcome what appear to be the absolutely insuperable difficulties which lie against deciding these points in the Roman sense, we can only feel surprise and regret; but it is quite in order that he should proceed to strengthen his motives to action by the instance of Jonah. But until he has done this; until he has thus satisfied himself, as far as he can, that God's Will really does point in the same direction as his personal impulse; to appeal to Jonah, or to other examples of obeying or disobeying real calls of God in Scripture, is to beg the whole question which ought to be at issue; it is to do, however unconsciously, a violence to the true teaching of Scripture, and to play a trick of a very serious kind with the conscience itself.

And if Jonah's case has no bearings upon those who are hesitating, on adequate grounds, as to the path of duty; still less does it say anything to those who are conscientiously satisfied that God has not called them

to the duty which Jonah's example is employed to recommend.

A man is invited to accept some work for which he believes himself to be unfitted. It is a great and noble work; it is pressed upon him by persons who have high claims to respect and deference at his hands; it addresses itself not merely to his imagination, to his ambition, to his spirit of enterprise, but to higher things in him than these, to his love of God and of his fellow-men, to his desire to do good in his generation. But he knows himself not to be the right man for it. It is not merely that he has a general sense of unworthiness to undertake that or anything else, such as is professed, conventionally by everybody, and sincerely by good men, on all similar occasions: but he is conscious of particular deficiencies, and of particular positive features of his character, which make it certain that he must fail, if he attempts that specific work. This being so, whatever authority may say to him, he would fall below the commercial level of morality if he were to undertake the work in question; since such an undertaking implies an engagement on his part to produce certain results, which he knows himself to be distinctly unable to produce, in consequence of those defects or tendencies upon which he can lay his finger, and which incapacitate him for doing so. It is easy to say that we ought to trust to the grace of God to make up the deficiency: but, in ordinary cases of this sort, grace perfects natural tendencies, it does not create powers which do not exist in a natural germinal form. His friends may say, You are Jonah, and that is your Nineveh. But if Jonah had been unable to walk or to use his voice, either a miracle would have been wrought, or he would not have been sent on his errand. In all such cases the real question to be answered before all others is, whether the man has been called to this work by God at all? Of every

such call there are two component parts—the outward voice and pressure of authority or circumstance, and the inward response and ratification of the conscience. Where this last is not found, there God has not as yet really spoken; and it is not found, if men are honest with themselves, when they are conscious of specific incapacity to discharge duties which circumstances appear to thrust upon them.

But if this history may be easily misapplied, it is much more likely in our day to be neglected altogether. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the moral value of such a history, whether for the purposes of warning or of encouragement.

Wherever the path of duty is clear, and it is deserted for some reason that seems to have a great deal in it, but that will not meet the Eye of God—or for no real reason at all,—there the moral features of Jonah's history, under different outward circumstances, repeat themselves.

Take the case of a clergyman who has reached middle life, and whose conscience distinctly tells him that he ought to do more for God's glory than he has done yet. He sees now for the first time what his office really implies, but he is attracted by some private and secular opinion or taste, which turns him aside from obedience to God's voice within him. After all, he says to himself, there are other ways of doing good; it is possible to do good with less of professional narrowness, and more of a broad human spirit than in the clerical life. Possibly, as with Jonah, the patriot within him becomes the foe of the prophet: he will serve his country in this world, and let others help his conntrymen, if they can, towards the next. He resolves, as the phrase is, to "give up being a clergyman." Of course, he cannot really forego his responsibilities, or erase from his soul the indelible stamp

of his consecration to God's service, any more than he can scratch out the ineffaceable marks of his baptismal privileges. Before God and His Angels, throughout eternity as in time, for weal or in woe, he is an ordained man; the gifts and calling of God being in this, as in other ways, without recall and repentance. But doubtless as far as the world goes, he can, if he so desires, forego all that proclaims his spiritual character; he can dress like a layman, talk like a layman, betake himself, so far as the law will allow, to lay occupations, and distinguish himself even among laymen by his ostentatiously anti-clerical tastes. In other words, he can "fly to Tarshish" from being before the Lord as His servant and minister. Happy, indeed, if he is not permitted to reach his goal; happy if, overtaken by a tempest of adverse circumstances, he is thrown in his agony into a retirement which buries him for a while away from the face of man, and enables him to commune with his God, and to understand his inalienable responsibilities, in full view of the realities of life and death. Better, doubtless, it were never to have fled to Tarshish; but if the error have been made, the storm and the whale's belly are but pledges of a Love Which will not leave him to himself.

Or take the somewhat analogous case of a younger man who has formed a serious intention of serving God in Holy Orders, and in such a mind comes up to this University. He has had no other plan for life; the desire has been strongest in him in his best and holiest moments; his natural dispositions, the wishes of his parents, and, above all, his sense of the solemnity of life, and of the majesty and necessity of revealed Truth, have moulded his purpose. When he has heard of the poverty and crime which are distancing the best efforts of modern society to overtake them, and others have talked of social science

congresses, of economical statistics, of new efforts at legislation, a voice within him has said clearly, distinctly, Arise, go unto Nineveh. When, turning the eye of his soul within, he has observed the various evidences of an indestructible life-principle, and has reflected upon the priceless value of one undying soul—his own—or on the responsibilities of each towards all, and of all towards each; the word has come to him, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh. And when, looking out of and away from himself, he has beheld Jesus Christ our Lord dying upon the Cross of Shame, dying for him as for all, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him That died for them, and rose again;" the word of the Lord has been again heard within his soul, Arise, go unto Nineveh. If he can trust any instinct for good, if he can trust any clear intimation of destiny, if he can surrender himself to any certain verdict of conscience, he is bound to devote himself to the spiritual work of the Church of Christ.

He comes to Oxford, hoping to find nothing but sympathy, encouragement, guidance, for all the noblest and highest aspirations within him. But a voice here whispers to him too often,—in a less religious spirit than Jonah's political theories,—and certainly not in the spirit of the Word of God to Jonah: "Is it not better to live for this world of which we are sure, than for the next world, which at best is a matter of speculation? Is it not a greater distinction to wear the livery of an earthly service than that of a clerical caste? Are not the clergy —the country clergy—wanting in breadth and culture? Do they not pass their lives between district visitors, and coal-tickets, and blanket-societies, and soup-distributions, and the visits of school-inspectors and missionary deputations, and church decorations, and the infinite pettinesses and details of village or country-town life? Is it not

better to sit loosely to theological systems, or rather to sit above them; to do good in a general unprofessional way; to be less clerical and more human; to take a practical view of life, which shall leave theology with all its encumbrances of sentiment and passion to minds of a lower and narrower make?" Why, after all, should he go to Nineveh; why not go down at once to Joppa, and pay his fare, and embark for Tarshish?

And so ten or fifteen or twenty years pass by; he is in the midst of the sea of life, with all its interest, but with all its liabilities. "They that go down to that sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For at His Word the stormy wind ariseth which lifteth up the waves thereof: they go up to the heaven and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of the trouble."[1] Happy and blessed, indeed, are such when it is so; when a great reverse of fortune, or a bitter heartache, or an illness which makes death and judgment realities, forces them into retreat from the mistakes to which they have surrendered themselves, and to real converse with God. It may be too late then really to attempt what might have been easy in early years; it may be impossible, when the shadows are lengthening year by year upon the plain, to set out for Nineveh. Yet failure in trying to do right is better than inaction; and an intention to serve God than a wish, more or less disguised, to forget Him.

But Jonah need not be a clergyman; and Nineveh may represent other than clerical fields of work. Jonah may be an eldest son, whom God has blessed with a large property, perhaps in Ireland, and to whose soul He has whispered, that this property, which enables him to be of use to hundreds, perhaps to thousands of poor people, has

[1] Ps. cvii. 23-26.

grave responsibilities. The possession of this property enables him to do that which no steward, no relative, can do for him; this property, and his work in it and for it, is his Nineveh. He has, he can have, no doubt about the outward or the inward elements of his call. God speaks to him both through circumstances, and in the sanctuary of conscience, with equal clearness.

Now suppose him to try to persuade himself that some other line of life, which may have undoubted claims upon others, but which involves his leaving the care of his property to relatives or officials, is the best for him; what is this but a fleeing to Tarshish from being before the Lord? For, layman as he is, this young man is also a prophet; he occupies a position which enables him to insist upon many great moral and spiritual truths before a large circle of people, who will receive them with the same attention and interest from the lips of no other human being. If he foregoes this duty, through an error of self-will; if he leaves the truth unsaid and the good undone, which he, of all men, might best, if not alone, say and do, he is treading most certainly in the footsteps of Jonah. It may be that life will flow on smoothly and prosperously with him, and that he will grow old without finding out the truth; but it will be better for him if it be otherwise. It will be better for him far, if some great failure or misfortune leads him to review his responsibilities as God's Providence defines them; and if, while he yet has life and health to do so, he arises and goes to his Nineveh, at the word of the Lord.

Jonah's history is full of solemn warning; but it is also full of encouragement. It sheds light upon the meaning of a great deal of the suffering which meets us in life. Of the pain which we witness around us, some is purely penal, some belongs to our moral education, some to mysteries of the Divine government which we shall

never fathom in this life. But a large department of human pain comes under the same category as the chastisement of Jonah. By a reverse of fortune, or the death of a near relative, or a severe illness, God stops men on their voyage towards some self-chosen Tarshish: He plunges them beneath the waves of adversity while yet He provides an asylum in which their moral life is preserved, in which they may turn to Him in penitence and sincerity. Oh! blessed mystery of His Providence, often witnessed, but little understood, when the barrier of self-will, in all its forms, is gradually but firmly broken down in the soul, and at length there is one prayer stronger and more frequent than any other—a Christian paraphrase of the prayer of Jonah:—

> "Wash me, and dry these bitter tears,
> O let my heart no further roam,
> 'Tis Thine by vows, and hopes, and fears,
> Long since—O call Thy wanderer home;
> To that dear home, safe in Thy wounded Side,
> Where only broken hearts their sin and shame may hide."[1]

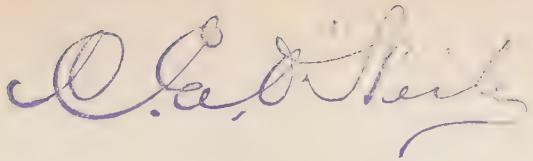
But to understand these great truths, the solemnity of life, the tremendous power which we each and all possess of throwing it away, the reality of God's guidance in it, if we will look out for tokens of His Will within and without us, and the blessedness of all suffering which brings us after wilful error to our senses, we must do that which is difficult at the outset of life, we must place ourselves, in thought, at its close.

It is when the clouds are gathering, hour by hour, more and more thickly over the sky of time, when the pulse of strength is sensibly ebbing, and the distant horizons of eternity are coming more and more distinctly each moment into view, that the real importance of the lessons of Jonah's history become apparent. It is in those hours, hours they must be of dread perplexity, if they are not

[1] *The Christian Year:* Good Friday.

hours of resigned hope, that a voice like that of the Tyrian seamen whispers to conscience over some great mistake, then seen first by the soul in its true proportions, Why hast thou done this? It is too late to prescribe self-humiliation and self-punishment, when the margin of life leaves no room for sacrifices, such as might retrieve the unfaithfulness of the past. God may indeed see and accept a pure intention; but it is surely better not to risk an anxiety of which the event may well be doubtful. God grant that we may pray Him sincerely to show us each "the way that we should walk, since we lift up our souls unto Him;"[1] and that when His promise, "I will inform thee and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go, and I will guide thee with Mine eye,"[2] is made good to us, we may indeed discern His guidance and obey it.

[1] Ps. cxliii. 8. [2] Ib. xxxii. 9.



SERMON IX.

A SISTER'S WORK.[1]

Col. iii. 23, 24.

Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

IT is our business this morning to consider some of the claims of Sisters of Charity upon the sympathy and support of the Church of Christ. And the precept of the Apostle sanctions and is in keeping with this direction of our thoughts; his words might well form the motto for a religious community devoted to works of piety and mercy. Of course, these words apply forcibly and distinctly to all Christians as such. Every Christian has his proper work to do. Every Christian is bound to do it with all his heart. Every Christian, in doing it, is bound to keep his eye, not on the persons or circumstances which render such work necessary, but on our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whose providence all that touches each one of us is really ordered. Every Christian knows that his reward may not be sought and is not to be had here, or at the hands of a human master. Christ will recompense all honest service that is done to Him; He is too indulgent to overlook what in itself is poor and unproductive enough; and that we should serve such a Master is a fact that warrants both our efforts and our hopes.

I.

Every Christian is concerned in the Apostle's words; yet, as a matter of fact, they were addressed to a class of

[1] Preached in the Church of All Saints, Margaret Street, London, on the Second Sunday after Trinity, June 6, 1869.

persons who, happily, are no longer to be found in English Christendom. They were addressed to slaves; and the slavery of the ancient Græco-Roman world was even a more hateful and brutal thing than slavery has been in modern times and in Christian countries. In ancient Rome a slave was looked upon purely as a chattel; his earnings belonged to his master; he might be sold, made a present of, lent, pawned, or changed away for some other slave. The law did not treat the slave's union with a wife as a marriage. His witness was inadmissible, except after torture, in a court of justice. The slave might be worked or put to death at his master's will; and the ordinary punishment of death, in the case of slaves, was crucifixion. The Emperor Augustus ordered Eros, his steward, to be crucified on the mast of his ship for having roasted and eaten a quail. When Pedanius Secundus was assassinated, under the Emperor Nero, four hundred slaves were killed for not having prevented the murder. When the slaves of Lower Italy, under Spartacus, rose against their oppressors, the Roman general Crassus, who defeated them, erected crosses all along the road from Rome to Capua, on which ten thousand slaves were executed. A large number of slaves were condemned as gladiators to compulsory combat. Under Trajan, on one occasion, ten thousand slaves were thus engaged for one hundred and twenty-three days. These were not the worst aspects of ancient slavery: it "rendered possible horrors" which need not be touched upon here, and "such as only the most depraved imagination could conceive." [1]

After a battle, or at the unloading of a pirate-ship, the slave-dealer made his purchases; and the slaves were

[1] Döllinger, Heid. und Judenth. ix. 2, 3, sqq., gives the authorities. The condition of slaves was slightly bettered, on the whole, under the Empire, by the Petronian law and other alleviating measures.

then exposed for sale in the Roman or provincial markets, with their prices and recommendations marked on a tablet hung round their necks. In wealthy households each slave had one particular duty, which was shared by others. He waited in the hall; or he was chained, as a porter, at the door; or he looked after the sleeping apartments; or he carried letters; or he tasted everything that his master ate; he was a cook, a groom, a steward, a bath attendant. In many cases the Roman slaves were more refined and educated than their masters: their business was to wait upon the master's mind, to furnish thought, reason, epigram, clever ill-nature, at the right moment. A large class of slaves were bought and kept on account of their intellectual qualities. Immense sums were given for such literary slaves. To name one name, never to be mentioned without respect by Christians—Epictetus was a slave. The great maxim, which he followed throughout life, "Suffer and abstain," brings him, perhaps, nearer than any other Stoic to the moral spirit of Christianity; and his hard lot, doubtless, had its effect in elevating both his teaching and his character.[1]

It is remarkable that the countries into which the Gospel first penetrated when it passed beyond the frontiers of Palestine, were those which, more than any other, supplied the Roman slave-market. The populations of Syria and Asia Minor yielded the slaves most in request among the Roman aristocracy;[2] and the Apostolic letters which deal with the subject are for the most part addressed to these provincials. At Ephesus, at Colossæ, in Crete, in that large collection of Churches to which St. Peter addressed his first Epistle, the case and the duties of the Christian slaves engaged the earnest attention of the great Apostles. The drift of the Apostolic teaching is always consistent with itself, and so with the advice

[1] Lecky, *European Morals*, i. 258.

[2] Especially the Cappadocians.

given by St. Paul in the text to the Christian slaves at Colossæ: "Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters in the worldly order of things, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be a slave or free."[1] This counsel was urged upon the Christian slaves at Ephesus.[2] Some years later, St. Paul writes anxiously to their Bishop Timothy on the same subject. It would seem that some Ephesian slaves doubted whether any service whatever was due to a Christian master; and they were, at any rate, slow to consider their service in the light of a religious obligation. "Let as many slaves as are under the yoke," wrote the Apostle, "count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren; but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the Benefit. These things teach and exhort."[3] It was in entire conformity with this teaching that St. Paul had himself acted in the case of the slave Onesimus. Onesimus had escaped from his master Philemon, at the same time, as it would appear, carrying off some of his master's property; he had then been converted by St. Paul to the faith, and had been of great service to the Apostle during his first imprisonment in Rome. St. Paul sends him back to his master at Colossæ with a letter, pleading indeed, as St. Paul could plead, for consideration and

[1] Eph. vi. 5-8.

[2] Possibly at other places in Asia Minor, if, as is probable, the Epistle to the Ephesians was an Encyclical Epistle.

[3] 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

indulgence, but fully recognising the relation which bound Onesimus to Philemon's service until the latter might choose, of his own free will, to dispense with it.[1] Titus, as Bishop of Crete, is to "exhort slaves to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."[2] St. Peter rules that the character of the master for kind-heartedness and justice can make no difference as to the duty of the slave. "Slaves, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward."[3] The reason which the Apostle gives is the high honour which has been put upon undeserved suffering by the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. "This is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps."[4]

That the Apostles should have dealt with the problem of slavery in this way, has sometimes been both a topic of objection against Christianity which has been urged by infidels, and a matter of surprise to Christians. It might have seemed more natural to us that an institution so opposed to the temper of the religion of Christ should have been at once denounced by His Apostles. The Gospel had proclaimed humanity and charity; slavery was in practice a violation of both. Christ came to purify men; slavery brutalised them by great character-

[1] Philemon 10-21.
[2] Tit. ii. 9, 10.
[3] 1 St. Pet. ii. 18.
[4] Ib. 19-21.

istic sins. The Incarnation was a proclamation of man's dignity in the sight of God, since the Eternal Son had taken man's nature. Slavery looked like the degradation of human nature, reduced to a system and made permanently hideous.

It is usually said by way of reply, that it was no part of the business of the Apostles of Christ to inaugurate a social revolution, by proclaiming war to the knife against the institution of slavery. A vast uprising, ending in a bloody massacre, would have been a poor result to be achieved by the messengers of the Gospel of Peace. It was better, and more in keeping with the scope of Christianity, to begin, not from without, but from within. It was better to leave the social structure intact, to recognise it as part of the actual fabric of human society, but to sow broadcast in the minds alike of master and slave those motives and principles which first of all would render it, comparatively speaking, tolerable, and, in the long-run, would wipe it away from the face of Christendom. The worst evils of slavery would be destroyed at once by the great Christian principle, that any bodily suffering is altogether preferable to the least consent of the will to sin or to falsehood. The slave could always suffer; and meanwhile the process of softening, humanising, and finally destroying slavery would go forward as the centuries passed. It would be very interesting, but it is no part of our present business to review that process in detail; to trace its quiet but inexorable advance, through imperial laws, through decrees of councils, through popular habits and manners; until at length, in our own day, and not, as we must candidly admit, without the aid of other than religious influences reinforcing it, it has, by God's good Providence, achieved its final and decisive triumph.

This account of the matter does not, however, fully

meet the difficulty. It does not entirely explain the conduct of the Apostles towards the slaves of their own day and generation. To Onesimus and others, it would have been a poor consolation that some centuries after their death slavery would be finally done away with through the influence of Christianity. It would have been a poor consolation, if this world had been indeed their all, and if the Church had done no more for them than to assure them of a distant social victory, in which they could have no share beyond that of a generous hope.

The truth is, that in dealing with the question of slavery the Apostles assume and act upon a great and most fruitful principle, lying at the very heart of Christianity, and having a very direct bearing upon our present subject.

That principle is the insignificance of this present life in view of the next. What we think about most earnestly in this world, what we love and what we hate, what we resolve upon and what we decline;—these are matters of vast moment, since they are bound up with that inward movement and drift of our spirits' deepest life, which ultimately determines our place in the endless hereafter. But what our external circumstances are will be deemed of little comparative importance, when once it is seen that this life is the shortest of prefaces to that which follows it. They only can lay much stress upon the presence or absence of the outward decorations and elegancies of life, who see little or nothing beyond it, whose most distant horizon is some way on this side of the grave. And they who, like the Apostles, have been far-sighted enough to gaze, steadily and often, at the heights and depths of the Eternal World, will not embark their most earnest thought, or their purest and strongest enthusiasms, in correcting or re-arranging even what is painful and harassing in the

things of time. It is not that they live only for a future reward, and that they are incapable of a disinterested virtue; they have, in fact, a larger conception of human destiny than men who see nothing beyond the tomb, and they dispose of the forces they have at command accordingly. It is not worth their while to lavish thought and effort upon that which so soon will have been parted with for ever. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven."[1] "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."[2] "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."[3] This general way of looking at life was not dependent upon any exceptional circumstances in the Apostolical Church; it was a natural result of our Lord's own teaching. What else had been the real meaning of His counsel to the rich young man? or of His parable of the fool's soul, that was required of him on the night of his resolution to pull down his barns and build greater? or of His command not to lay up treasure upon the earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but to lay up treasure in heaven? St. Paul was but expanding and applying the teaching of Jesus Christ; and in dealing with slavery the application of the principle was obvious. If a man was called into the Church as a slave, and had freedom

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. [2] Rom. viii. 18. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

within his reach, St. Paul advises him to remain as he is; it is not worth his while to change.[1]

Now it was this habit of mind, sitting easily to outward circumstances and making the care of the soul a supreme consideration, which led, by a natural process, to the growth of a rule of life and institutions in which certainly the best is not made of this world, and that with a deliberate view of making the best of the next. In this, Christianity was but perfecting and making the most of one of two leading types of human character. "There have ever," observes a recent writer, "been stern, upright, self-controlled, and courageous men, actuated by a pure sense of duty, capable of high efforts of self-sacrifice, somewhat intolerant of the frailties of others, somewhat hard and unsympathising in the ordinary intercourse of society, but rising to an heroic grandeur as the storm lowered upon their path, and more ready to relinquish life than the cause they believe to be true. There have also always been men of easy tempers and of amiable dispositions—gentle, benevolent, and pliant—cordial friends and forgiving enemies—selfish at heart, yet ever ready, when it is possible, to conciliate their gratifications with those of others—averse to all enthusiasm, mysticism, utopias, and superstition—with little depth of character or capacity for self-sacrifice, but admirably fitted to impart and to receive enjoyment and to render the course of life easy and harmonious. The first are by nature Stoics, and the second Epicureans."[2]

[1] This would seem to be the real meaning of 1 Cor. vii. 21, *δοῦλος ἐκλήθης; μή σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι.* Cf. St. Chrysostom and the Greek commentators, *in loc.* Many moderns understand the verse differently, and supply *τῇ ἐλευθερίᾳ* to *χρῆσαι.* But Meyer and Dean Alford have shown that this is grammatically wrong; the main emphasis is really thrown upon *δύνασαι* by *καί.* It is a pleasure to me to mention here that my dear friend, the late Rev. James Riddell, of Balliol College, believed the true sense of the Greek to be that given above.

[2] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, i. 180.

The first are ascetics; the second, with whatever modifications, sensualists. . . . It is obvious that the first of these types of character furnished Christianity, if we may so speak, with its best raw material, to be perfected and softened by grace. The self-repression of the Stoic without his harshness, the softer feelings of the Epicurean without his excessive tenderness towards self;—this was to be the Christian type. We must not shrink from a good word which the devil has contrived to discredit, by refusing to say that the Christian, as such, is an ascetic. The Christian exercises himself to have a good conscience towards God and towards men;[1] he keeps under his body and brings it into subjection;[2] he learns to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ;[3] he "takes up" the cross of Jesus, without waiting until it is laid upon him.[4]

This, then, as it was the broad principle which reconciled the slave to his condition, so it is the broad principle which leads the Sister of Charity of her own free will to choose a life of poverty and of obedience, and, more or less, of hardship. She lives not for this world, but for the next. She works for an unseen Master; being free from all men, she has made herself, like the Apostle, the slave of all, that she might gain the more.[5]

II.

Here, however, it is necessary to pass from general statements into details, and in particular to meet, so far as is compatible with these narrow limits, the question, "What is the use of Sisters of Mercy? Why should people live a life of strict rule, and dress in a particular way, and aim at a higher religious standard than their friends and neighbours? If they wish to do good, cannot

[1] Acts xxiv. 16. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [3] 2 Tim. ii. 3.
[4] St. Matt. xvi. 24; St. Mark viii. 34; St. Luke ix. 23.
[5] 1 Cor. ix. 19.

they do it after a more simple, unpretentious fashion; and is it not better for themselves and for others that they should do so?"

1. Now, the first answer to this criticism is, that Sisters of Mercy, by the very force of their outward habit of life, are a standing proclamation of the supreme importance of the Eternal World, and of all that bears upon it. If they did nothing else, they do this; they advertise prominently before the eyes of men the claims of religion, the interests of the human soul. In this respect they are like churches and clergymen. The outward form of the one, the dress and bearing of the other, is an unspoken word for God. And the reason why irreligious people often feel and sometimes express their dislike to these outward signs of religious profession, is, that they do thus proclaim the belief of mankind at large in the importance of religion. Now, clergymen and churches have witnessed for God in England for some fifteen centuries; but in modern times, until quite of late years, we have not seen women conspicuously devoted to the work of Christ, as an absorbing life-work, going in and out among us. They bear a witness, therefore, which is effective in proportion to its comparative novelty. Many a man asks himself the question, as he notes them quietly threading our streets on their errands of love, why this or that lady of his acquaintance should retire from society and devote herself to prayer and ministries of mercy; it may be against the remonstrance of friends, and certainly in spite of the contemptuous and avowed dislike of the general irreligious public. One answer is, that she deliberately thinks God's service a serious life-absorbing thing, and that she is willing to venture this world for the sake of the next. He may not agree, but, if he is fair and reasonable, he at least respects her. His own faith is much too feeble a thing to warrant any such efforts after the kingdom of the

unseen; but he does justice to a stronger faith than his own; he recognises its consistency; he is too generous to depreciate a virtue which as yet he does not mean to imitate. Now and then, perhaps, the question presents itself to him, If the eternal world be a reality, may not her line be the line of common sense? What if, after all, she should be right?

2. A second answer to the criticism is, that a Sister's life furnishes great opportunities for leading a holy life, not easily to be found elsewhere. Of course, a Christian may be sanctified in any condition of life whatever. In some cases the very absence of religious privileges has, by increasing anxiety on the score of spiritual health, appeared to lead the soul to live closer to God. But cases of this kind are too exceptional to be made a ground of any general inferences. As a rule, aids to holiness help to make earnest Christians holy, and their absence tells in an opposite direction. Now, it can scarcely be denied that in this respect a Sister of Mercy has great advantages. The effort which she has already made in breaking with the ordinary surroundings of life, is of itself a guarantee of moral purpose full of promise for the future. But besides this, constant occupations, following each other according to a settled order, and involving an almost uninterrupted discipline of the will; the felt sympathy of others who, like herself, are honestly endeavouring to live only for God; and the frequent services, meditations, Communions, which are a matter of course in a religious community;—these things do, as a matter of fact, exert a power upon thought and life, not in rare cases only, but upon the average, and to an extent of which they can have no adequate idea who have not closely observed it.

Indeed, much of the devotional language of the Church, and in particular of the Psalter, belongs properly and, so

far as its direct force goes, exclusively to those Christians who have grace and heart to imitate a Sister's self-devotion. Let us consider seriously the real meaning of such sentences as the following: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require, even that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord and to visit His Temple."[1] "Seven times a day do I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous judgments."[2] "All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue."[3] "Lord, what love have I unto Thy law: all the day long is my study in it."[4] "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee."[5] "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness."[6]

Some of these sentences, it will be said, are only suitable to the circumstances of a religious Israelite. If this should be allowed, there can be no mistake about the general drift and force of language of the kind. Translate it into Christian phrase, and it can only be appropriate in the mouth of one who makes the service of Christ a paramount consideration in life, and who gives the best of time, thought, affection, effort, interest to it. This, and nothing less than this, is the real "spirit" of these aspirations; they breathe entire devotion of the whole mental and moral life to God. They are not entirely honest and natural in the mouth of those who ordinarily and unthinkingly repeat them. Most of us do nothing which corresponds to praising God seven times a day because of His righteous judgments, nor do we sincerely prefer the lowest offices in the Church of Christ to opportunities of mixing with the polished ungodliness of good society.

[1] Ps. xxvii. 4. [2] Ps. cxix. 164. [3] Ps. xvi. 3.
[4] Ps. cxix. 97. [5] Ps. lxxiii. 24. [6] Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

But to a Sister of Mercy, these Scriptural aspirations are real things; they are a part and parcel of her daily life; she has already made them a matter of rule and practice, and, as a consequence, she feels at home in the devotional language of the Bible to an extent which those of us who live at large in the world and enter keenly into its ways of thinking and acting can but imperfectly realise.

No doubt it will be urged that a holy life can be lived at home, by the wife or by the daughter, not less truly than by the Sister of Mercy; that

> "The trivial round, the common task,
> Will furnish all we ought to ask—
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us, daily, nearer God." [1]

Most true. But the question is, as the revered author of these lines, at least in his later days, not unfrequently said, whether self-denial and sanctity are as much a matter of course in the one case as in the other. Has not St. Paul already decided the question, in words which are not often quoted in our pulpits? "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." [2] And is not this in harmony with the experience and common sense of human life, as truly as it is also in harmony with the Apostolic injunction that marriage should be honourable in all,[3] and that to forbid

[1] *Christian Year*, Morning. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 32-34.

[3] Heb. xiii. 4, τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσιν, "sc. ἔστω. Andere ergänzen ἐστίν . . . Allein hiergegen spricht der Zusatz καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος, da Letzteres nicht als eine factische Wahrheit behauptet werden konnte." Huther *in loc.*

to marry,[1] as if marriage involved spiritual defilement, is not other than an apostasy from the faith of Christ, Who has sanctified wedlock by taking our nature upon Him? It is not a question of depreciating marriage, but of insisting upon the spiritual advantages of a single life freely undertaken for the glory of God; and if people could approach this question without prejudice, they would admit that the answer to it is already given in the words of the Apostle, which simply describe a matter of daily notoriety. And yet, "Do what you will," it is said in reply, "you cannot keep the world out of the Sisterhood by your apparatus of rules and fences." Undoubtedly we cannot. The human heart is true to itself, within the Sisterhood as without it; and here, as there, the old soil often bears its wonted fruit of shortcoming, weakness, failure, corruption. But in the one case these natural tendencies are, comparatively speaking, kept in check; in the other they run luxuriant riot. For the life of a Sisterhood is not a long procession of outward forms; it is a spiritual atmosphere. It envelopes, penetrates, saturates the soul; it insensibly renders the thought of God welcome and familiar; it smooths off the rough edges, and unveils the secret warps of natural character. The Sister, "hidden privily in God's presence from the provoking of all men, and kept secretly in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues,"[2] is able more practically than are women in the world, to understand "with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," until she is filled with all the fulness of God.[3]

3. A third answer to the question before us is, that Sisters, as a matter of fact, and generally speaking, produce the best Christian work. They cultivate in their lives, and from their lives they carry into their work,

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 3. [2] Ps. xxxi. 20. [3] Eph. iii. 18, 19.

the Christian virtue of intensity. This virtue is produced by that mingled sense of the awfulness and blessedness of existence, which Christianity is specially able to communicate to the human soul by the two doctrines of our Creation for God's glory, and our Redemption from sin and death by Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God. A sincere belief in these simple but tremendous truths leads as a matter of course to a consecration of the several powers and faculties to God's service; thought, feeling, action, are all devoted to Him, and devoted to Him with that downrightness and sustained tenacity of purpose which makes life a force, and which stamps character and excellence on all that it attempts.

Remark here, my brethren, that the work of a Sisterhood is a result of its life, and not to be secured without it. Nor is the life of a Sisterhood a thing to be just tolerated out of consideration for this resulting work, on the principle that we put up with the din and smoke of a manufactory for the sake of the useful or beautiful objects with which it enriches us. If we are to compare the life and the work of a Sisterhood with each other, the life is the nobler and more precious thing of the two; it is related to the work, as the moral and spiritual cause to the material product. We may sometimes hear language about getting Sisters to work a parish or a penitentiary, just as a sempstress might get a sewing-machine, which would enable her to do more and better needlework than she could with her fingers. This is to treat a Sisterhood as if it were only a piece of social mechanism, to be "worked" by the clergyman of the parish just as he might work a club or a clothing society; whereas, in point of fact, a Sisterhood is a living body, with a moral and spiritual life animating and controlling it. Such an institute is as certain to do moral and spiritual good as a tree is to bear fruit; but then it is rather to be fostered

as a tree than handled as a machine, since its productive power originates not in any impulse that is given it from without, but in the vital force of its own spiritual energy.

This point is well worth observing, if we are to avoid some serious practical mistakes; and it enables us, before we proceed further, to observe the difference between works of what is commonly called philanthropy, and those of Christian charity. God's "philanthropy" is, indeed, that department of His all-embracing Love which is centred upon man, and specially manifested in the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, for us men and for our salvation;[1] man's philanthropy is the love of his kind, without any necessary reference to God. As applied to man the word is only used in the New Testament of kindly actions on the part of pagans,[2] based on the instinct of a common nature. Now, as a part of our natural and human outfit, this virtue of philanthropy is to be spoken of with all respect; but to compare it with the Christian grace of charity, is to place it under a very serious disadvantage. It is as unlike charity in its spirit, as it is inferior in point of productive power. Philanthropy begins and ends with man; charity begins with God, and loves and blesses man for God's sake. Philanthropy is a social principle; while of charity the motive is exclusively religious. Philanthropy, in modern Europe, is that outward and restricted imitation of the Church's charity which has been attempted by philosophy; although, strange to say, it has of late been asserted that the Church has learnt to be charitable in her old age, by copying the philanthropy of the world.

Is this, then, the verdict of history? Was there a primitive time when the Church had wealth at her com-

[1] ἡ φιλανθρωπία . . . ἐπεφάνη, Tit. iii. 4.

[2] φιλανθρώπως, Acts xxvii. 3; φιλανθρωπίαν, Acts xxviii. 2.

mand and liberty to use it, and was nevertheless neglectful of the claims of the suffering and of the poor? That we may answer this question, let us go back to the early ages; and let us keep our eye chiefly upon that particular form of doing good with which the All Saints' Sisterhood is conspicuously associated.

The first hospitals and houses of refuge of which we have any notice date from the second half of the fourth century. Scarcely forty years had passed since the Edict of Milan had given freedom to the Church; she had just had time to survey and marshal her resources; to provide, first of all, for the spiritual necessities of the people, and then to make some provision for their bodily ailments. Sebaste, in Pontus, about the year 355, has the honour of furnishing the earliest hospitals on record.[1] But such-like institutions could not but quickly become common; they spread rapidly over the face of Christendom. There were boarding-houses for travellers,[2] hospitals for the sick,[3] almshouses for the old[4] and for the poor,[5] orphan-asylums,[6] and foundling-hospitals;[7]—all creations of the Church, and conducted on strictly religious principles. Pre-eminent among a multitude of these works of charity was the great hospital founded at Cæsarea by St. Basil, about A.D. 372. How deeply he was interested in the work of this house may yet be seen in his extant correspondence.[8] Every description of sufferer was welcomed at its gates; but especially the lepers, for whom no provision had been made in heathen times. It was, St. Gregory of Nazianzum says, like a little town;[9] and indeed it became a model for other houses of the same description throughout the

[1] According to St. Epiphanius, the lame and imbecile were taken in at the *πτωχοτροφεῖον* of Sebaste. Eustathius the Bishop had made the unhappy Aerius its master. Hær. 75. 1.

[2] *ξενοδοχεῖα.* [3] *νοσοκομεῖα.* [4] *γεροντοκομεῖα.*
[5] *πτωχοτροφεῖα.* [6] *ὀρφανοτροφεῖα.* [7] *βρεφοτροφεῖα.* Möhler.
[8] Epp. 142, 143, 144. [9] Greg. Naz. 63.

East. St. Chrysostom imitated it in his works at Constantinople; and Alexandria soon abounded with hospitals for the old and the infirm. The Imperial family took the lead in setting on foot schemes of benevolence. Not to mention Theodosius the Great and the ladies of his family, the Emperor Justinian, in another generation, converted into a hospital a building which he had destined for a palace;[1] while Justinian and Theodora were patrons of a penitentiary for fallen women. At Rome, Pammachius impoverished himself by building a vast guest-house for travellers, in which the poor and the sick were received on their arrival at the gate of the ancient capital of the world. Fabiola spent much of her time and strength in ministering to the crowds who filled those hospitable walls: in 387, writes St. Jerome, strangers from Britain, Egypt, and Parthia had already found entertainment within them.[2] At Cyzicus, Bishop Eleusius founded an almshouse for widows; on the Euphrates, the hermit Thalassius set up the first blind asylum of which there is any record. The Apostate Emperor Julian observed that the popular influence of the Christians was largely based on their care for the sick and poor; and he endeavoured, but in vain, to rival their works of mercy by efforts on the part of the Government; little suspecting the chasm which parts mere official routine and political motives of action from the promptings of God's supernatural grace.[3]

Enough has been said, my brethren, to dispose of the question whether the practical charity of the Church was taught her by the philosophers of the eighteenth century. She was at heart during the years of persecution what she became in fact during her earliest days of freedom and prosperity, the true alleviator and nurse of human want

[1] Menæa. ad 27 Juni, qu. by Möhler.
[2] Ep. Hieron. ad Pammach. 48, 49, 51, 57, 66, 84, 97.
[3] For these authorities, see Möhler, Kirchengeschichte, i. 690.

and suffering. And in the fourth century, as now, her ministers of mercy were chiefly those who had devoted their lives to God's service, by a formal self-dedication to Him, and renunciation of the world. It was instinctively felt that the best work would be done by the most devoted Christians; and it is worth our while to note those characteristics of the work done by a Sisterhood, which underlie and explain its unquestionable excellence.

III.

In the first place, then, the work of Sisters of Charity bears the stamp of self-sacrifice. They certainly do not offer, either to God or to man, that which has cost them nothing. It has cost the Sister her home, her comforts, her amusements, her friends, her tastes, her independence, perhaps her social position, to do this work. It has cost her many struggles, many misgivings, it may be many tears, as certainly, many earnest prayers. For her work is the fruit and product of her whole life; and her life as a whole is a life of sacrifice.

And herein she does but obey an irreversible law of the moral kingdom of God. If any one truth is plain, it is that no real good is ever done among men without self-sacrifice. Think over the lives of all those who have laboured in their day and with effect for the cause of God upon the earth. Did not the Father of the Faithful leave parents and friends at the call of God, to spend his years as a wanderer with no settled home, but in reality to become the ancestor of a people who were to be the religious teachers of humanity? Or look at the man after God's own heart, the founder of the long dynasty of Jewish kings, the great ancestor and eminent type of the Superhuman Monarch; did he not live a life of sacrifice, imposed upon him in his youth by the suspiciousness and

malignity of Saul, and in his later days by the treachery of a rebellious child and the fierce self-will of the powerful chiefs who stood around his throne? And was not Daniel, the staunch upholder and chief confessor of revealed truth during the dark times of the Babylonish Captivity, conspicuous as a man on whose life sacrifice was stamped throughout? Was it not thus with Nehemiah, the rebuilder of the sacred city, amid the scoffs and insults of the heathen? Do not Apostles follow in the same line of sacrificial labour? are they not made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men?[1] are they not "in labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft"?[2] do they not refuse to count their life dear unto themselves, if only they may finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God?[3] And when from Apostles we look backward and upwards to their Lord and ours, is not His life the highest expression of this great productive Law of Sacrifice? Surely we have but to consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,[4] in order to mark that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves,[5] and to reflect that the members cannot triumph if they recline on roses while the Head Himself is crowned with thorns.[6]

There is sacrifice and sacrifice. In some it is conspicuous and striking, as in the martyr and the soldier. In others it is unobserved, private, commonplace, yet not less worthy of its name. Such was the work of Dorcas; such the widow's mite. Sacrifice is to be measured, not by the results which it produces, but by the opportunities and resources of the producer; and it is from this point

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 23. [3] Acts xx. 24.
[4] Heb. xii. 3. [5] 2 Cor. v. 15. [6] St. Leo.

of view that we can best do justice to the degree in which it enters into the life and work of a Sisterhood. Certainly philanthropy has enlisted sacrifice in its service; it can point to names which will always be named with honour by Christians, and especially by English Christians. But the question is as to the rule, not as to magnificent exceptions which may be quoted; and as a rule, sacrifice does not enter into non-Christian philanthropic schemes, which only aim at producing a *maximum* of results at a *minimum* cost to the producer. Charity begins with the motive, leaving results, to a certain degree, to take care of themselves; and the event justifies the method of procedure. Philanthropy has too often to pay down to every single official it employs a full money equivalent for his services; and when, after all, with resources thus diminished, it reaches the object of its care, it can only command the industry of a conscientious officialism to do its work. Christian charity economises at the outset by its command of motives which dispense with pay; and at the bedside of the sufferer, it disposes, at least relatively, of larger means of doing good, administered by a spirit which looks for no earthly recompense in acknowledgment of its efforts. It is because the Sister of Charity is an impersonation of the moral law of self-sacrifice, that she is so incomparable as a worker; so certain, in the long-run, to distance all rival efforts, by labours which are not less economical than they are devoted. What she does it matters not to her, but she welcomes that from which others shrink—the effort and pain her work may cost her. Her enthusiasm for self-sacrifice is a first reason of her success.

2. A second reason is, that, as a matter of religious duty, she concentrates all the powers she can command upon the work in hand. The weakness and unproductiveness of most lives arises from their dissipation; dissi-

pation of thought, dissipation of tastes, likings, resolves; dissipation, in short, of interests. In the modern world especially, men and women shrink from keeping one object steadily in view, and bending all their efforts upon its attainment. They are surrounded, especially in the middle and upper classes of society, with an unprecedented number of distractions; and they find in variety of work not merely a relief from monotony, but the attractive idea of a larger field of thought or action; the persuasion that they have many and varied occupations, and fill a larger place in the world than would be otherwise possible. But the probability is, that, only having very limited powers, they spread their little stock of thought and resolution over a wider instead of a smaller surface; and that, as a result, they think and act with a superficiality proportioned to their presumed "breadth of interests." "Do a little, but do it as well as you possibly can," is in all matters, earthly and heavenly, the safest rule. A few prayers, if only a few can be said readily, and these said with the whole outpoured strength of the soul; a few hours of work, if it may be, done with the whole effort of the intelligence and the will;—these are the secrets of excellence, alike in the things of earth and of heaven. A man who makes a chair or a table as well as possible, is morally greater than a Prime Minister who trifles with the interests of a great country. A Sunday-school teacher who leaves no stone unturned to convey his lesson to the minds of the children round him, is higher in the scale of real excellence than an Archbishop who should neglect his province for the sake of politics or of worldly society. What is worth doing at all, is worth doing as well as possible, and therefore with simplicity and concentration of purpose. "Whatsoever ye do," says St. Paul to the Colossian slaves, "do it heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto men." That is

the reason for carrying all that we can of thought and strength into whatever we do: as Christians, we offer what we do to a Heavenly Master, and He is worthy of our best. Now this conviction is especially present to the mind of Sisters of Mercy, who have dedicated their whole lives to Jesus Christ, and who are happily cut off from the distracting interests which lead so many people in the world into doing really nothing, by the sheer attempt to do a great deal. A Sister learns what she has to do; she loses no time in deliberating whether she shall do it or not; whether she shall try to do something else at the same time; or whether she shall do something different when she has done this. Enough with her is the task and obligation of the hour. She puts her whole heart into it, as a simple matter of religious duty, offered up moment by moment to Christ her Lord; and the natural consequence is, that her work, whether skilled or simple, is, as a rule, better than the same work when done by other people.

3. A final secret of the excellence of a Sister's work is her elevation of aim in doing it. She works neither for pay, nor for human applause, nor for her own inward satisfaction in the work she does. She works, indeed, side by side with other workers on earth; but her eye is upturned to heaven. There she sees the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory, shedding on her poor efforts His most gracious and indulgent smile; entitled, as He is of right, to so much, yet deigning to bless and accept so little. This Divine Master, invisible to sense, but ever obvious to faith, Who has taken flesh, and died, and risen, and ascended, and then, unwearied even with this love, has given Himself again in the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood to be the sustenance of His Church, is the object of her constant thought, of her passionate affection. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live

by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."[1] The Apostle's words are hers also; and her work, like his, is therefore elevated above those pettinesses and earthlinesses which make so much that is done in God's name and for God so mean and unheavenly. The moral character of the worker is imprinted upon the work. As we look into Fra Angelico's angels, we understand that he painted them on his knees. The commonest, and roughest, and coarsest work may be refined and spiritualised by this elevation of aim and effort, which tramples upon self in all its forms, gross and subtle, and gazes adoringly upon the Throne of Christ.

It will be urged that the work of a Sisterhood is not always of this ideal description; that the devil and the world find their way into the cloister; and that the corruption of what is best in aim is worst in fact. Be it so. Which of God's gifts to man may not be, has not been, abused? Take the Bible itself. Has any book in the world been made to contribute so many sophisms and falsehoods to the cause of human error and degradation? But is that any reason for withdrawing the Bible from general circulation? The question in all such cases is, whether the abuse is so general as to counterbalance the rightful use of the blessing. And, looking to the matter before us, who can say that in the case of Sisterhoods the abuse has predominated? Grant that here and there they betray the traces of human weakness; that "Sisters" are to be found who are false to the spirit of their vocation, and "Mothers" who are uninstructed in that wisdom of charity and good sense which largely makes up the gift of government. Grant that books are to be met with, written by anonymous authors, and professing to describe under feigned names so many years' experience in this Sisterhood, and so many in that, with the object of mak-

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

ing, if it may be, a little controversial capital out of the credulity and selfishness of the general public. Does this show that, upon the whole, such institutions work badly, or work otherwise than well? If any one desires a partial answer to that question, let him investigate the constitution and work of the All Saints' Sisterhood. He will find nothing that can fairly be condemned by any principles known to Christianity, and much which is an active and perpetual rebuke to the lives of ordinary Christians. He will find that, by means of religious organisation and a regular mode of life, a small company of single ladies have been able to set on foot and direct a group of charitable works, each one of which, under ordinary circumstances, would have demanded the capital and machinery of a commercial association. An asylum for aged women; an industrial school; an association for married women under circumstances of temptation; a similar association for girls and young women; and a third for children under the age of sixteen; an orphanage; a ladies' mission among the poor in Soho; and the care of large workhouses, both at Manchester and Chichester; —these are among their minor labours. Their great work, which for its thoroughness and excellence has received the highest praise at the hands of most distinguished members of the Medical Faculty in London, is the care of University College Hospital, and, as a pendant to it, of the Convalescent Home at Eastbourne. It is for these objects more especially that I venture to ask your alms to-day. Such undertakings, and the lives which warrant and complete them, are an enrichment of the whole Church; they are the salt of the Church, as the Church herself is the salt and preservative of the world. Let us then associate ourselves with this Home by a threefold effort;—by an endeavour to understand it better; by hearty prayers for its success; and by con-

tributing something to its support, which will really involve sacrifice on our part, and so will enable us to enter into a spirit which produces such admirable results. We cannot but be bettered ourselves by an intelligent, prayerful, self-sacrificing endeavour to assist these ministers of mercy. Let us do our best; for the sake of the work which God enables them to achieve, for the sake of the life which makes such work possible, above all, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and God, to Whose glory both the life and the work of this institution, day by day, hour by hour, are unreservedly devoted.

SERMON X.

CHRIST AND EDUCATION.[1]

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

WHEN St. Paul thus speaks of the work of building up the Church of Christ, he is using a metaphor always intelligible, and specially familiar to his readers, whose fathers must for the most part have watched Corinth rise from its ruins. The Church is here set before us as a public building, inhabited by the Divine Spirit, and constructed out of such materials as the convictions, the hearts, the souls of men. St. Paul is the prudent overseer of the works who has taken particular care that the foundations of the building are sound, and to be relied on. When these are firmly laid, other hands might complete the edifice; and there were at Corinth some who wished to complete it according to their own plans, which differed considerably from those of the Apostle. Whatever these builders might do, the Apostle warns them to beware of tampering with the foundation itself which he had laid. To do so would imperil the entire structure. "As a prudent master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

As to the whole Catholic Church of Christ, it was already plainly built upon Jesus Christ as its historical

[1] Preached in the Church of St. James, Piccadilly, London, on the Third Sunday after Trinity, June 13, 1869.

foundation. It grew out of the fact of His appearance in the world and ascent to heaven; He was the reason and account of its existence; so that if He had not lived and died, its existence as St. Paul found it, when he entered it at his conversion, would have been inexplicable. In this sense, no man could lay a foundation other than that which was already laid, which was Jesus Christ. It was impossible to undo history; and history was there to say that the Apostolical Church was built on Jesus Christ and on no one else. To insist upon this is not altogether superfluous. A paradox which found favour with some of the earlier moods of German Rationalism went to the effect that St. Paul and not Jesus Christ was the real founder of Christendom. How the writer of the indignant appeal, "Was Paul crucified for you Corinthians, or were ye baptized in the Name of Paul?"[1] could ever have been seated, by the convictions of any intelligent readers of his Epistles, in his Master's place, might well raise our wonder; if only experience did not prove that of all credulity the easiest is that which is enjoined by unbelief, and of all theories, the wildest, those which are put forward in order to discredit the creed of Christendom. If the Church is built upon the labour of Apostles, as her foundations, the Apostles themselves rested on the Chief Corner-stone. And, indeed, since Schleiermacher, the paradox in question has been discredited wellnigh everywhere. It is one of that great man's many claims to honour, that amid whatever defects of his individual creed, and of the system in which he found himself, he did more than any other writer in his day and country to reassert Christ's true historical relation to the Christian Church.

When St. Paul wrote it was pretty well half a century too late, it is nineteen centuries too late now, to speculate

[1] 1 Cor. i. 13.

upon a new foundation for the historical fabric of Christendom. The Corinthian teachers could no more touch that than we can; but there is a sense in which a religious teacher may contrive to lay a new foundation. Admitting that Christ is the Founder of the Christian Church, he may deny that the Person of Christ is the fundamental fact in the Christian Religion, the one foundation upon which it is possible to build up the Divine Life in the Church and in the soul. The Corinthian theorists, no doubt, had the highest respect for Jesus Christ; but the essential thing in Christianity, as some of these at least understood and taught it, was a certain degree of observance of the old Jewish law. That was the foundation; and Christ's Person, illuminating His Teaching, His Death, His Resurrection, His Intercession, His Sacraments, was only part of the superstructure. It was more than ornamental; but it was something less than absolutely necessary. In St. Paul's eyes this dislocation was fatal not merely to the beauty and symmetry, but to the very existence of the whole. "Other foundation," he said earnestly, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The truth which is thus before us may be looked at either in its bearings on the form of the Christian Creed and Life, or as governing the convictions and conduct of Christians respecting the various efforts at human improvement which are made in the world around us. Let us take these points in order.

I.

The mistake of the Corinthian teachers, as regards its form, was only possible in the Apostolical age, when as yet the real relations of the Church and the Synagogue were imperfectly defined. But in its spirit, it is a mistake

which, under new forms, may reappear, does reappear, perpetually; and we do well to notice one or two samples of "other foundations" against which it is well to guard.

(*a.*) It is, then, Jesus Christ, and not doctrines about Jesus Christ, on which the soul can really build. To say this, is not to disparage the precious guidance of Scripture or Creeds or Councils. Those Apostolical words, these later definitions, which furnish in our day the favourite topic for so much shallow declamation, are, as well-informed and believing Churchmen know, when accepted by the undivided Church, the voice of that Eternal Spirit by Whom the whole Body is governed as well as sanctified. They guard and sustain in Christian thought the Divine Saviour's peerless honour; they forbid, in tones of merciful severity, false and degrading beliefs about Him. Yet He, our living Lord, is the foundation; and no soul can altogether rest upon the formulæ which do but uphold and regulate our estimate of His Glory. We prize both Scripture and the Creeds for His sake, not Him for theirs; and to rest upon them, as distinct from Him whom they keep before us, would be like building a wall upon a measuring-rule, instead of upon the block of granite, of which it has given us the noble dimensions.

(*β.*) Still more true is it that it is Jesus Christ, and not feelings about Him, upon which the soul's life can be built. Feelings are great aids to devotion; they are often, we may trust, special gifts of God, the play of His Blessed Spirit upon our life of affection, raising it towards high and heavenly things. Yet what is so fugitive, so Protean, so unreliable as a feeling? It comes and it is gone; it is intense, and forthwith it wanes; it promises much, and presently it yields nothing but a sense of moral languor and exhaustion that succeeds it. Feeling shouts "Hosanna" to-day, and to-morrow "Crucify;" it would pluck out its right eye for the Apostle of its choice, and

then suddenly he is become its enemy because he tells it the truth.[1] We look hard at it, and we see that when it was at its best, some of it at least was physical; that in it nature had perhaps donned a religious guise and was mimicking grace. It may perchance here or there have made obedience easy for a moment; it may have seemed to lend wings to charity; it may have roused us to efforts of which we are generally incapable. But it is much too soft and unsubstantial a thing to be the foundation of a stern life of action and suffering. After all, feeling in any case only points to Jesus Christ; it belongs largely to ourselves; and we cannot extract the foundation-stone of life out of the exhausted quarries of unrenewed human nature; we must go out of ourselves if we would build upon a substructure that will not give way.

(γ.) It is Jesus Christ Himself, and not His teaching or His work apart from His Person, which is the true foundation. His work, indeed, can only be appreciated in the light of His Person; His death is at best heroic self-devotion (if it be so much as that) unless His Person is superhuman. If Jesus is only man, or if His Person be left out of view, there is no more reason for reliance on His death than on the death of Socrates. His Sacraments are only picturesque unrealities, unless He Who warranted their power lives and is mighty; apart from His Person, they have no more spiritual validity than an armorial bearing or a rosette. And His teaching cannot be represented as a "foundation" of Christian life which may be substituted for His Person, and enable us to dispense with it, for the simple reason that the persistent drift of that teaching is directly and indirectly to centre thought, love, adoration upon Himself; as though in Him, as distinct from what He said and did, mankind

[1] St. Matt. xxi. 9; xxvii. 22. Gal. iv. 15, 16.

was to find its true and lasting strength and peace. Doubtless His words are, beyond any others, the stay of the soul; He spake as never man spake. But they are this, not simply because of their intrinsic merit, or rather because of our power of doing justice to it, but because they are His. His Person is the foundation, His teaching relatively to His Person is but part of the superstructure; and when He reveals hell, or proclaims the absolute authority of the Old Testament, serious Christians believe Him just as implicitly as when He pronounces the Beatitudes, simply because it is He Who speaks. In this respect we of to-day are in a different position from His disciples before His Resurrection: they learned devotion to His Person through listening to His words; we who, since Pentecost, have received the faith, believe His words, because we know Whose words they are; His Person is for us the fundamental fact which underlies, explains, justifies, sustains all that is built upon it.

(δ.) In the same way, Jesus Christ Himself, and not His Example, is the foundation of the soul's life. It is impossible to separate Christ's Example from the consideration of His Person; the estimate we form of it must vary with our belief about Himself. Take His condescension, to which St. Paul has so especial a devotion. If He is only the son of Joseph and Mary, if He existed for the first time when He first drew breath in the manger of Bethlehem, His Condescension is at least not greater than that of princes and philosophers, who have bent the knee before Him, and who have for His sake spent their lives in teaching the ignorant and in relieving the poor. If Christ be merely human, much of what Christians believe to be His condescension is but an acceptance of His natural circumstances. But when St. Paul reveals to the Philippians the secret of his own enthusiasm on the subject, he sets out by saying that He

Who bent Himself to the life of a slave and to the death of a felon, had before existed in the Form of God, and did not make an illicit claim when He claimed an equal share in the Divine Prerogatives with the Father.[1] In the light of this truth His Example is indeed a moral power, so great, that, as the mind dwells on it with patient reverence, it might well seem irresistible. But it is this, because to be understood it must be referred to His Person; because He Who condescended so low was what He was, is what He is; because to be appreciated His Person, even more than His words or His acts, must be distinctly before us.

In modern times much skill has been expended in attempting to make an essential extract of Christ's words or actions from the pages of the New Testament, leaving the question of His Personality out of view, as if it did not really affect the substance of the Gospel. What Christ was, or is, men say, cannot matter, if we can possess ourselves of His Teaching, and profit by His Example. In this sense, Fichte observes that merely historical truth about Christ can only make a man wise, not happy. "If any one," he urges, "is really united to God, and is in God, it is a matter of indifference to him by what means he attained this: and it would be a very useless and perverse employment to be ever recalling to mind the means instead of living in the thing itself. If Jesus," he continues, "could return to the world, it might be expected that He would be perfectly contented to find Christian teaching ruling in the minds of men, whether His merit in the matter were acknowledged or slighted."[2] In the same sense Strauss asserts that "if it were Christ's purpose to make the world entirely free, it must also have been His will to make it free from

[1] Phil. ii. 6-8.

[2] Anweisung zum seligen Leben, qu. by Luthardt.

Himself, that God might be all in all."[1] And if Christ is merely human, and His Person, therefore, of no exceptional importance, it is impossible to deny the justice of these remarks. A high-minded, disinterested man will be anxious, after doing his best for his fellow-creatures in his day and generation, whether as a teacher or a philanthropist, to withdraw as far as possible from the notice and memory of men. In exact proportion to his moral elevation is his sincere anxiety to escape from all merely personal distinction, as from that which too easily might taint the disinterestedness and purity of his life and work. At the bottom of this feeling in us lies the profound sense of our imperfection and nothingness before God; and Our Lord sanctions it by making service, not position, the measure of true greatness among His Apostles; by selecting the widow and her mite for especial honour; and by His counsel not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth. We understand this, like all other deep moral teaching, only so far as we endeavour to act upon it. If it gives us any real pleasure to see our names in subscription lists, or in the newspapers; or to hear that we are being talked about; if no sense of "deep remorseful fear," as the poet of the *Christian Year* expresses it, on the score of what we know about ourselves, turns such notice into genuine penance; then we may be disposed to think and speak of this feeling as morbid: then,—but not otherwise.

And if Christ imposed His Person, and not merely His maxims, upon the thought and heart of the world, this departure from the ordinary instinct of high human goodness must have depended upon the fact that such a course was necessary. It implies that Christ's Person was, in His own estimate, of even more importance to mankind than His teaching or His philanthropic activity;

[1] Der Christus des Glaubens, p. 217.

and that apart from His Person neither His actions nor His words could be justly appreciated. To say that it only implies that He was sinless, is to forget that the absence of active sin does not destroy that consciousness of imperfection which a creature, as such, must feel before the awful sanctity of God. Something else is meant by the moral fact before us, by this startling spectacle of Holiness in human form putting itself forward to court the homage of minds and hearts throughout all time.

All is surely and sufficiently explained, if only we believe with the Apostle that Jesus Christ is "over all, God Blessed for ever."[1] To make Christ the foundation of the soul's life, would be to interpose a creature between its deepest sanctities and its Maker, unless Christ Himself were God. A purely human Christ might conceivably be the architect, or even the scaffolding of the Spiritual Temple; he could not be its One Foundation. It is the Divine Christ of St. Paul Who is that One Foundation: Whose words have absolute authority; Whose example carries resistless weight; Whose redemptive work saves us, if we will, to the uttermost, from our strongest enemies, from sin and death; Whose grace and power are not matters of antiquarian interest, but living and perpetual facts in the Sacraments of His Church;—Who is the solid foundation of our life and hope. It is His living Person wherein Christians are rooted, and upon which they are built up;[2] certain that from Him they can draw all needful nourishment, and that upon Him they can rest with unwavering trust.

II.

If we pass to the bearings of the Apostle's doctrine upon efforts at human improvement around us, it is

[1] Rom. ix. 5. [2] Col. ii. 7.

obvious to remark that to nothing can it apply with more urgency and directness than to the sacred work of education. Education is the most important department of the self-maintaining activity of the Church of Christ. By education the Church takes possession of her place and share in the coming age; by it she hands on to the minds and hearts and hands of another generation the treasure of faith and love and duty which came to her nineteen centuries ago, and of which she is the trustee in the interests of humanity. If she had nothing better in her keeping than a human speculation about God, there would be a certain degree of immodesty and violence in this uninterrupted effort to cramp and mould the otherwise free thoughts and aspirations of a future time within the narrow formulæ of the past. But to possess a Revelation from heaven is to be already in advance of the highest efforts of human religious genius; and to communicate it is the first duty which its guardians owe to human ignorance and to human suffering. "He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children; that their posterity might know it, and the children which were yet unborn; to the intent that when they came up they might show their children the same; that they might put their trust in God; and not to forget the works of God, but to keep His commandments."[1]

Education, then, is necessary, not merely to the well-being, but to the very existence of the Church; could she cease to educate she would cease to live; she would die out from among men by a process of inevitable exhaustion. And if the Church of Christ is to educate to any purpose, Jesus Christ must be just as much the foundation of her teaching in the school as of her teaching from the pulpit; He must be the one foundation on which she builds,

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 5-8.

whether it be the fabric of intellectual truth or the fabric of moral character.

What this practically means we shall perhaps best decide by contrasting it with some doctrines about education which, with greater or less distinctness, are emerging nowadays more and more prominently into view.

1. There is the theory which would identify education with the communication of Useful Knowledge, as it is termed; that is to say, of knowledge of such subjects as enable boys and girls to make their way in life, without entering on the great questions of man's origin and destiny. This idea of education is put forward with many motives, which need not now be analysed; suffice it to remark that it certainly is not based upon the one foundation whereon alone Christians can consent to build. It ignores Jesus Christ altogether, and of set purpose; and in doing so, it inflicts upon education itself the gravest injury. First of all, it abandons the true idea of education, as the art of making the most of the whole man that can be made of him, the art of training, exercising, unfolding, perfecting all his faculties, moral, spiritual, and even bodily, as well as mental. It substitutes for this grand conception the narrow aim of communicating certain sorts of knowledge, useful under certain transient circumstances, to his mind. By its very phrase "useful" knowledge, it begs at the outset an enormous question, as to what knowledge *is* really useful, or most useful to man;—a question which can only be answered when it is decided whether man does or does not exist in an eternity where his happiness depends upon his conduct in time. Thus even its intellectual aim is a very narrow and poor one. It keeps the pupil's eye off all the great horizons of human thought and interest, because in resting on them it would be obliged, either

definitely to accept, or explicitly to reject, the Christian creed. It merely supplies matter for conjecture on the subjects of deepest concern to a human being; it offers nothing in the way of guidance or satisfaction; and as to morals, if it is consistent, it abstains from all interference, except so far as the law of the land, or the lowest of conventional standards, may oblige; it allows a boy to "take care of himself."

Christians can have no objection to giving the very best instruction that can be given in this so-termed useful knowledge; but they cannot admit that it is an adequate substitute for the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ to teach a boy algebra, or history, or the languages, or the art of reasoning. Nor can the heart and will be safely left to parents and clergymen, while the whole real training of the intellect is made over to the secular schoolmaster. The secular schoolmaster is too likely, in the long-run, to be in England what he generally is in France; and secular educationists who are strongly opposed to teaching the definite Christian Creed, do not always object, at least violently, to a systematic depreciation of all Christianity whatever, on the part of the teacher of useful knowledge. But even if the secular Educator be a silent Christian—silent under the constraint of the system he administers—the effect upon the boy's mind is disastrous; the tree of knowledge, of partial knowledge, is planted by other hands than those which plant the tree of life. The silence of the master, to whom the boy is conscious that he owes the full expansion of his mental powers, more than counterbalances the mother's voice, who "is no doubt so good, but of course not really educated." And when this division between intellect and heart is complete in the soul, it is not difficult to predict the consequences.

2. There are those who would take a larger view of the

scope of education. Their formula is "Develop nature." Give all that you mean by nature free, unrestricted play. "Natural thought, natural feeling, natural impulse; these are the saplings which education should water and foster. Let them grow at will; aid their growth; do not prune and twist what you will only spoil. If they expand into a jungle; what matters it? The great thing is to avoid mannerisms and artificialities. Let a boy think and feel as he likes; let him do what he likes, with due respect to the policeman; and let education confine itself to augmenting his stock of mental and physical power, instead of attempting to give him a direction."

This theory, in forms very variously modified, has many apologists among us at the present day; but it may be doubted whether any of them is so consistent or so eloquent in its advocacy as was the celebrated son of the Genevese watchmaker in the last century. As the apostle of natural freedom, of unconventionality, of doing what you like and because you like it, Rousseau is unrivalled. According to Rousseau, it was not merely the still subsisting feudalism, the still dominant Church, the old society with all its tyrannies and corruptions, that was fatal to the well-being and happiness of the people. The very arts and sciences were great culprits; man is really happy only in the state of pure nature; civilisation brings with it only moral decline and the worst evils of corrupt society. With Rousseau this was no mere passionate rhapsody; it was a serious conviction. He would prove it historically by pointing to the nations of antiquity: in Egypt, Greece, Rome, the moral qualities of patriotism and courage declined as the arts of civilisation advanced; Spartan morals were at once ruder and purer than those of Athens. He would prove it psychologically by tracing to each branch of knowledge some attendant form of moral decay: astronomy has been the

source of superstition; eloquence, of ambition; geometry, of avarice; ethics, of self-complacency. Without the sciences, man would never have been the prey of paradox; without the arts, he would never have been enervated by luxury. Rousseau feels that it is impossible to recede too far from the eighteenth century civilisation of France: he taxes his original and fervid eloquence to describe a so-termed state of nature, in which man lives without education, "just as he came from the hands of nature;" in which innocence, simplicity, personal freedom, equal rights, are seen in their perfection:—an ideal state which once was real, and to which society must return, if it would be saved from the miseries and vices which thicken around the steps of advancing civilisation. Rousseau was consistently enthusiastic in his praises of the Hottentots and other savages; they had at least escaped all the mischiefs that came with culture; they were an anachronistic relic of primitive virtue. Rousseau's "Émile" was naturally condemned by the then Archbishop of Paris; his theory of society was encountered by the polished and withering sarcasms of Voltaire; but, for all that, Rousseau was in harmony with much that belonged to his age, and, in turn, he influenced it to an extent which it is difficult for an Englishman at the distance of a century to understand.

But between Rousseau and the echoes of Rousseau on the one hand, and Jesus Christ on the other, there is a vital difference. It is not that Rousseau would give man freedom, while Jesus Christ would enslave him; it is that Rousseau ignores the real facts of human nature, while Jesus Christ insists upon recognising them. Rousseau maintains that man is born good; the Gospel that he is born with a taint of inherited corruption. Rousseau will have it that all the evil which a man learns is taught him from without; our Lord rules that "out of the heart

proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;"[1] just as the Old Testament had proclaimed the human heart to be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,[2] and man to be shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.[3] Here, then, is simple contradiction as to a fact of the greatest importance; and whether we analyse a single human soul, a single child's character, or whether we look to the opinion which society has instinctively formed about its component units by the precautions which it takes in elaborating government and in enacting law, we cannot doubt which is in harmony with experience. Rousseau had scarcely sunk into his grave, when his dream of the perfectibility of nature was rudely answered by the atrocities of the Revolutionary Terror; perpetrated, as many of them were, while the idyllists of theophilanthropy were still chanting the praises of a theory which contributed at least as much as any political doctrine to deluge France with blood.

It is enough for a Christian that such a theory lays another foundation than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came because nature had been tried and found wanting. It was crushed to the very earth by a depressing sense of weakness; it was already responsible for centuries of crime. How could the fabric of truth be reared upon a very quicksand of inconclusive guesses? How could the edifice of virtue be supported on a morass of moral rottenness and vice? Jesus Christ came to be the foundation of man's new life precisely because nature was thus incompetent and demoralised; and it is only when He, Who is the real foundation, has invigorated it by His regenerating touch, that nature, renewed and purified, can furnish stones for the building which is based on its Restorer.

[1] St. Matt. xv. 19. [2] Jer. xvii. 9. [3] Ps. li. 5.

3. Here a more cautious form of opinion presents itself. Grant, it says, that education cannot be narrowed down to the idea of communicating useful knowledge, and that, practically, it is very unwise to leave human nature to develop itself. But cannot an intellectual training be sufficiently supplemented by the moral idea of duty? Duty, that which has to be done, whether by the head or by the hands; duty, that for the sake of which, anything must sometimes be suffered;—this looks like a moral idea, sufficiently fertile and strong to serve as a good working foundation for education and life. So it seemed to those professional moralists of the heathen world, the Stoics; so it is in the judgment of the ordinary practical unspeculative Englishman. "England expects every man to do his duty," is a saying which, apart from its association with a magnificent moment in our history, is exactly suited to strike a chord in the heart of a people like ourselves, impatient of theories, and eager for some visible fruits of moral convictions. Among no other people of Europe has the idea of duty, in its abstract, unanalysed, unsupported form, exercised such sway and empire, as has been the case during the last 150 years in England; nor can we wonder, if at the present day it appears to furnish many a teacher with the moral leverage which he wants in order to do his work. "Teach a child to do his duty;"—that, at any rate, may pass for a sensible, working fundamental rule in education; a formula which will cut short a great deal of useless irrelevant discussion; a practical receipt which keeps clear, on the one hand, of Utopian dreams about the absolute perfection of child-nature, and, on the other, does not enter, even by a single word, upon the thorny questions which are said to lie inside the dreaded frontier of theology.

Nor is it my business, or my intention, to throw scorn upon a principle which, rightly understood, lies close to

the heart of every true Christian. If, however, the idea of "duty" is to be put forward as a good practical substitute for religious belief, the question must be asked, "What is duty?" That which we, each of us, have to do, is the answer. But, why have we to do what we have to do? Here Religion would reply, Because God bids us do it. But since this would at once raise the grave question, What do we know about God? and the abstract idea of duty is to be kept quite clear of theology; the answer is, Because our circumstances obviously prescribe it. But why are we bound to recognise, or still more to obey, any such dictation on the part of "our circumstances"? Why, for instance, may we not steal if we want to steal, and find that we can steal with impunity? Here two schools of moralists, each of them unusually and ostentatiously dispensing with God, come forward to give an answer. You must not steal, says the Utilitarian moralist, because, taking a wide view of the interests of human society, it is obviously a bad thing for those interests that you should steal, even if it should not turn out that dishonesty is a bad policy for your personal self. You must not steal, insists, with higher reason, the Intuitionalist, because there is within you an original perception of right and wrong, which, whether you will or not, must condemn your doing so. To measure duty by general utility, sharply observes the Intuitionalist, is "profoundly immoral;" such a rule might condone some of the worst excesses of which our nature is capable. To measure duty by the moral sentiment, dryly remarks the Utilitarian, is unspeakably foolish; it is, in reality, to appeal to the ever-varying taste of the latitude and the age, while the appeal is professedly addressed to a transcendental faculty, the existence of which cannot be scientifically proved.

The idea of duty, it must be admitted, is here in a fair

way to evaporate altogether; but it will probably be urged that a child, who knows when he is whipped and when he gets a prize, will not wander into the controversy between the Intuitionalists and the Benthamites. True; but you wish by the idea of duty to give a child that which will lead him to do right under all circumstances. And an abstract principle is not strong enough to do this: a child must rest upon the concrete and the personal. A child's common-sense tells him that duty implies a law to be obeyed, and that a law implies a lawgiver. Who is this lawgiver whose enactments are to be obeyed always, and at all costs? You name God; you cannot help it. But then the question arises, If God, the Holy and the Mighty, has given a law, in conscience, or elsewhere, has man kept it? And if man has not kept it, is God indifferent to the neglect, or powerless to notice it, or unable to reconcile the justice of His government with the presumable yearnings of His Fatherly compassion? Thus we reach the One true Foundation through the questions which the idea of duty cannot but raise. "What the (moral) law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh (that is, sinful human nature), God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[1]

4. But here a last desperate effort is made to lay a new foundation. "Anything to escape from definite Christianity!" It is admitted that something less abstract, less cold, less remote from the heart than the idea of duty is wanted for Education; that aspirations towards a higher world, and that some sort of sanction from above must be provided for. But this, it is argued, can be done very well without committing yourself to a definite creed.

[1] Rom. viii. 3, 4.

Extract the pure spirit, the genuine essence of religion from the dregs of dogmatic ages and systems, and place your extract at the service of humanity. All that a boy wants (I am quoting words that have been used of late) is a "vague and general notion of religious duty." Now I make bold to assert that advice of this sort is not so much the product of serious thought as of embarrassing circumstances. On the one hand there is a clear practical perception of the moral fruitfulness and force of religion in human life; on the other, there is disbelief, secret or avowed, in the soul-constraining truths which evoke and sustain religious life in the soul. But what God has joined together man cannot put asunder; and it is just as impossible to have religion without some sort of theology as to enjoy the sunshine without the sun. Religious vitality is strongest when the objects of faith are most clearly presented to the soul; just as the light and heat of the sun are stronger in a clear sky than when the sun is partially or wholly overclouded. A religious feeling directed towards the vague and the indefinite is not a thing to influence grown-up men at all seriously; to children it is simply unintelligible. This is not owing to the undeveloped condition of childish intellect; it is that herein children represent the common-sense of mankind, unsophisticated by theories arising out of the conflict between unbelief on the one hand and man's practical interests on the other.

Let us see how the theory of vague religious earnestness works in practice. It does not like the Creeds, or the doctrinal parts of the Prayer Book; it still, however, reads the New Testament, and it directs especial attention to the moral beauty of Christ's Human Character. An intelligent boy meets with the words, "When the Son of Man shall come in His Glory, and all His Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His

Glory."[1] His master knows that no serious critical reasons can be alleged for denying either that Jesus Christ spoke these words, or that by the phrase "Son of Man" He meant Himself. The boy asks, if he thinks at all, whether this is a serious prediction; and perhaps his master goes so far as to say that it is only an allegory. But, supposing it to be an allegory, asks the boy, what is it which is allegorised? One thing, most assuredly, among others, it must be replied; namely, that Jesus Christ, at some time or other, in some way or other, is the Judge of all human beings. If the allegory does not mean this, it means nothing, or it is altogether misleading. But if it does mean this, how does such a statement by Jesus Christ about Himself fit in with the character of a good man? The boy has heard of many good men, and he knows some; but he has never heard of any who talked about himself in this way! What right had Jesus Christ thus to speak? . . . We know the true answer to that question; but it cannot be given without dealing a fatal blow to the theory of vague religious feeling. That theory is, in truth, just as little at home in the New Testament as it is at home in the Creeds; and the questions which are naturally asked by a thoughtful child demonstrate its impotence just as well as a clear philosophical analysis.

The new educational foundations, then, which it is often proposed to lay in our time, will not suffice for the work of Christian education. "Useful Knowledge" alone will not do, because it leaves two-thirds of human nature altogether untouched. It says nothing to the heart and conscience, almost nothing to the will; whereas education should deal with man as a whole. Nature will not do; because what is wanted is something higher and purer than nature, something distinct from it. Duty will not do; because duty, if detached from the idea of God, is

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 31.

strangled in a conflict between opposing moral theories, and, besides, is too abstract and official an idea to control the heart, that is, the expansive and motive power, in man. Religion in the vague sense of the term will not do, because religion cannot exist apart from its Object. To be religious in any sense you must know God; to be religious in the Christian sense you must know Jesus Christ, both God and Man. If I do not mention dogmatic Deism, this is because it scarcely claims to be an educational basis: objections to Christianity in our day are, as a rule, objections to any serious Theism.

No. Other foundation can no Christian consent to lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. As the Truth, He consecrates and welcomes all efforts to acquire solid truth, all departments of real human knowledge. As the Perfect Man, He ennobles nature, He reinvigorates it with more than its ancient strength, He redeems it from its degradations and its shame. As the real and Living Legislator of the world, He imparts to the idea of duty, point and strength. Duty is but the passionate and practical sense of loyalty towards Himself. As "fairer than the sons of men" in His Condescension and in His Glory, as the Redeemer from sin and death, He makes religious feeling a permanent and practical force in the soul: the soul believes, acts, suffers, hopes, perseveres; exclaiming, "Who shall separate from the love of Christ?"[1]

The future of education in this country is a question infinitely more important than any one other of the anxious questions which are under discussion at this present time. Nothing, as I believe, would cut out by the roots the Christian faith of the English people so effectually as a system of compulsory secular education; the influence of parents and pastors would be no match whatever for the secular educator, for reasons which

[1] Rom. viii. 35.

have been hinted at. And two powerful currents are running in this fatal direction. There are those who ask for a really national system of education, with a view to making it secular. There are others who consent, more or less unwillingly, to the prospect of a secular system, in their passionate desire for a national one. Nothing that could fall from a Christian pulpit could have weight with the first of these classes; but of Christians who lend name or influence to the latter demand, I would ask as earnestly as I can—Which is really most for the good and happiness of man, a uniform system of instruction in such knowledge as is only serviceable for this world, or a less uniform effort to base the thought and life of the coming generations on the One Foundation, Jesus Christ our Lord? It seems to me that Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters must agree with members of the English Church, so far as to admit that our deepest differences are insignificant in presence of a dreary materialism which utterly ignores the other world; and that, until we can once more worship around the same Altars, no union can be more certainly blessed by God, or beneficial, in the highest sense, to man, than a union among all who name the precious Name of our Redeemer to resist to the very utmost all attempts at imposing a system of compulsory secular education on the people of this country.

And, certainly within a narrower sphere, the present duty of Churchmen is clear enough. While we have time, let us do what we can to strengthen and extend our present system; to make the secular teaching it administers more thorough; and the religious teaching more definite, more constraining, more attractive, more affectionate, more capable of leaving upon the souls of children and young people an ineffaceable impression. Would that all who take part in the sacred work of

teaching in Christian schools may rise to understand the great dignity, the extreme responsibilities of their task! Would that of the thousands who, in this metropolis, lavish their gold upon baubles, with which some short fifty years hence they will have parted for ever, might do something more worthy of Christ our Lord towards making education really Christian, and more nearly adequate to the wants of our vast populations!

The Annual Report of the schools of this Parish[1] states that it is with the utmost difficulty that the Treasurer is able to procure the funds necessary for carrying on a work of such vital importance to society and to the Church; and that, but for the munificence of a generous nobleman, the balance-sheet of this year must have exhibited a very serious deficit. Brethren, permit me to say that these things ought not to be so. The schools for which I am pleading have an importance which is not merely parochial; the parish to which they belong invests them with a large measure of public interest; and from their success or their failure will be argued that of the system, of which, by reason of their position and associations, they are such conspicuous representatives. Give freely to them, then, to-day, in the Name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. As you believe that He is the One Foundation of our real and highest life, of our soundest knowledge, and of our most precious hopes; as you would bear your part in bequeathing to the generations who will walk these streets when we lie in our graves waiting for the judgment, that truth about God, about man, about Himself, which Jesus Christ lived and died to teach us; do not be found wanting on an occasion, which so deeply concerns His interests and honour, the truest well-being of your fellow-creatures, and your own Christian consistency.

[1] St. James's, Piccadilly.

SERMON XI.

NOAH.[1]

HEBREWS xi. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

THE great servants of God, generally speaking, share in a common stock of thought, feelings, resolves, efforts, sacrifices, which lifts them, as a class, above the ordinary level of men, and makes them what they are. They live in the world without being of it; they look beyond its narrow frontiers for their main interests and ruling motives; in some shape or other they give up what they see for what they do not see. They feel, and feel practically, that human life is at once blessed and awful; blessed in its opportunities, awful in its possibilities. They act as men who are in possession of the clew to its real meaning; they know and feel why they are here, and whither they are going. And thus, in communion with the Author and Object of their existence, and in doing His Will, so far as they know it, by themselves and among their fellow-creatures, they realise the true scope and dignity of their being, and they fertilise the lives of all around them. "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law will he exercise himself day and

[1] Preached in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on Friday, March 11, 1870, as part of a course on "Typical Persons of the Pentateuch."

night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, that shall bring forth his fruit in due season. His leaf also shall not wither, and look, whatsoever he doeth it shall prosper."[1]

But each among the servants of God has some distinguishing characteristic over and above those which are common to them as a body. As in nature no two flowers, no two animals, no two human countenances are exactly alike, so in grace this reflection among the creatures of the Creator's exhaustless resources is even more apparent. Each who has a part, still more each who is eminent in the kingdom of grace, has in it a place, a form, a work, which belongs to no other; his character or his circumstances make him, at least in some respects, unlike any who have preceded or who follow him.

The great patriarchal figures who move before us in the sacred record of the antediluvian age are naturally shrouded in the dimness of a remote antiquity. Of the seven names which connect Seth with Noah, one only attracts a specific moral and religious interest; we pause at the holy life and the glorious translation of Enoch. With this exception there is little to arrest the attention beyond the length of years which was granted to those earliest generations of men. Strange, almost inconceivable, such longevity may perhaps appear when we contrast it with the existing limit of human life; but it is in harmony with the general scale of gigantic power to which all the most reliable evidence relating to the old world consistently points as characterising it.[2] Life in that early age was comparatively simple, regular, free from the social mischiefs and the weakness which came with a more highly organised society. The climate, the weather, the natural conditions under which man found himself were probably different from those which suc-

[1] Ps. i. 1-4.

[2] Delitzsch.

ceeded the Deluge. And Paradise was still recent, so that, although its great prerogatives had been immediately forfeited, the endowments of which man had been originally possessed, such as immortality, would die out only gradually, and as if by a process of progressive exhaustion.[1] Thus it was that when Enoch was translated into eternal life with God, without passing through disease and death, five generations of ancestors must still have been living, Jared, Mahalaleel, Cainan, Enos, even Seth; while Enoch's son Methuselah, and his grandson Lamech, had already attained an age far beyond that of modern man; Lamech was 113 years old. Of that antediluvian line, at the date in question, only Adam had been taken to his rest; only Noah was not yet born.

Sixty-nine years elapsed between the translation of Enoch and the birth of Noah, and during that period the moral atmosphere of human history had very rapidly darkened. This result appears to have been due to two main causes beyond the constantly self-aggravating effects of the Fall. In the fourth and fifth chapters of Genesis the development of the human race is traced through two entirely different lines—that of Cain and that of Seth. It would seem that, notwithstanding the sense of the phrase elsewhere in Scripture, the Sethites, and not any beings of a higher world, are in this connection meant by the august title "sons of God;" and the intermarriage between the Sethites, who had preserved the higher and better traditions of Eden, and the Cainites, who had entirely lost them, issued in the rapid moral degradation of the posterity of Seth. Distinct from this, but contemporaneous with it, was the appearance of the Nephilim, the "giants" of the English Bible. They seem to have been social tyrants rather than physically unnatural monsters; they made the law of might the ruling force

[1] Delitzsch.

of that primitive society. The corruption of the old world was therefore mainly traceable to two factors, each fatal to the moral well-being of man;—it was due to social oppression, or cruelty, accompanied by a reckless sensuality.

Lamech felt the evils of his time; all seemed to him to flow, as it did flow, from the sin which had been perpetrated and from the curse which had been pronounced in Eden. He felt the burden of his labour upon the soil, and when his son was born, we read a proof of the father's melancholy, together with the prophetic presentiment of a brighter future, in the name of the infant: "And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."[1]

Noah's personal piety is described by the same phrase as Enoch's: he "walked *with* God." This expression denotes even more than that which is used in a divine command to Abraham, and in Abraham's description of his own life.[2] Abraham was to "walk," and did "walk *before* God." Still more carefully should it be distinguished from "walking *after* God," a phrase by which Moses enjoins obedience to the law in one age, and Josiah renews it in another.[3] To walk after God is to lead a life of obedience to the commands given in the Divine law; to walk before Him is to be constantly conscious of His overshadowing and searching Presence; but to walk with God is something higher and more blessed even than this; it is to be, as it were, constantly at His side, and in His confidence; it is to be admitted to close and intimate communion with Him as with a most cherished Friend; it is to be in spirit what the Apostles were in the flesh, when they shared, day by day, in the

[1] Gen. v. 29. [2] Ibid. xvii. 1; xxiv. 40.
[3] Deut. xiii. 4; 2 Kings xxiii. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.

streets and lanes of Galilee, the Divine companionship of the Incarnate Son. Under the Gospel, it is St. John's "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;"[1] it is the equivalent to St. Paul's "being quickened and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[2] Once only besides does the phrase occur in the Old Testament, when the Prophet Malachi applies it, not to the conduct of the Israelites generally, but to that of the priests, who stood in a closer relation to God than the rest of the people, and could enter the Holy of Holies, and hold intercourse with the Presence Which was veiled from the public eye.[3]

Noah's piety, then, was of an exceptionally lofty kind. He is said expressly to "have been a just man, and perfect in his generations," and in the midst of the general corruption he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Of this general temper, his thankfulness after his deliverance is a sample; in order to express it, he sacrifices some of the little store which he had saved from the general wreck; and a sentence in Ezekiel implies that he had especial power as an intercessor with God.[4] Yet his intercession is classed with that of Job and Daniel, and his thankfulness was in the form, as in the spirit of its manifestation, an anticipation, to cite no other instances, of that of Moses. Holy Scripture, with its wonted simplicity and truthfulness, describes his fall, in his old age, into an error, whether of inadvertence or of weakness. It does not generally place him above the level of other servants of God. We have, then, still to ask what it was wherein Noah's specific and typical excellence more particularly showed itself? And this question is answered by the passage we are considering in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Omitting all else—and there is much—which the history of this great Patriarch suggests, it bids us observe that

[1] 1 St. John i. 3. [2] Eph. ii. 5, 6. [3] Mal. ii. 6. [4] Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

"by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Indeed, it is to this period of the life of Noah that all the allusions to him in the New Testament, with the exception of that in St. Luke's genealogy of our Lord, refer. In the mind not only of St. Peter but of our Lord Himself, "the days of Noah" were especially that most critical period of 120 years which preceded the Deluge.[1] It is possible that the social or political interest of his life may have been greater at earlier or at later periods; it is certain that the intensity of its moral interest centred in this.

In Noah's building the ark at the command of God there are three main points to be considered.

1. It implies, first of all, that he had an earnest conviction of the sanctity and greatness of moral truth; a conviction which, beyond any other, is the basis of the religious character. He was surrounded by populations which had broken altogether with the laws of God; impiety, impurity, lawlessness were the order of the day. "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually;" the corruption was universal, internal, profound. To a great many men a surrounding atmosphere of moral evil would be destructive of the moral sight. Those of us who know anything of our own hearts must know this; how easily we get accustomed to the sight of what is wrong, how soon we feel complacency, or something like complacency, towards it; how it undermines our sense of its malignity, and makes us, if not its captives, yet almost its tolerant apologists. "Neither doth he abhor everything that is evil," is a severe and exceptional condemnation in the mouth of

[1] St. Luke xvii. 26.

the Psalmist. But how widely is it applicable! It is not that evil, triumphant as in Babylon, crushes us into acquiescence: the remnant of the Canaanites that is in the land suffices for the corruption of Israel. There it is; and we take it for granted, in ourselves and in others. It is part of the actual sum of human life and activity, nay, it is a very large part. Within our own hearts, perhaps, it finds something like countenance and sympathy. What is the good, we say to ourselves, of always finding fault with the weather or with an epidemic? We may wish that things were otherwise, but we resign ourselves philosophically to take them as they are.

This acquiescence in evil as inevitable, involves something beyond it. It leads us to shut our eyes to what the deepest and truest of all human presentiments—apart from the Revelation of God—points to as its certain consequence. It blinds us to the fact that evil is, must be, followed, at some time or other, in some way or other, by punishment. Could it be otherwise, God would not be God—a necessarily and intrinsically Moral Being; could it be otherwise, the first and most earnest affirmation of a healthy conscience would be untrustworthy. And yet we may, by familiarity—tolerant, indolent, sympathetic familiarity—with evil, learn first to forget that evil leads to punishment, and next, not improbably, to deny it. It is inconceivable, we say, that a world-embracing mass of evil should be punished; its very universality is its safeguard and protection; it might be punished if it were an exception; it must escape, simply as being the rule. This is what we tacitly say to ourselves; we shut our eyes to a first truth of morals, and we flatter ourselves that we are only recognising facts.

It was against this silent and fatal influence of a corrupt moral and social atmosphere that Noah's life was a protest

and a resistance. Scripture says, he was "perfect in or among his generations," and those generations were altogether corrupt. He was a preacher of righteousness when righteousness was at a discount and unpopular. He walked with God when mankind at large had forgotten Him. He did not think the better of sin, of its real nature or of its future prospects, only because it was practised on a large scale, and with considerable apparent impunity. To Noah the eternal truths were more certain than the surface-appearances of life; he was certain that evil was evil, and that it could not but be followed by chastisement, because God is God.

2. Such a moral conviction, it must have been, which fitted Noah to listen to the Divine prediction of a coming deluge. God does not take the morally deaf and blind into His confidence. The words of Jesus Christ sound through all the ages of human history as the voice of a Divine Providence: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." He whose moral senses are alive, let him listen to the proclamation of God's Truth; to others it will only be meaningless. "He that willeth to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Noah was "warned" of God "of things not seen as yet:" he was the subject in some way—we cannot determine in what way—of a supernatural communication. It may have been some sensible voice from without; it may have been an unmistakably Divine assertion, yet from within. "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them from the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher-wood. . . . Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and everything that is in the

earth shall die. . . . But with thee will I establish My Covenant."[1]

Why should Noah believe this prediction sufficiently to act upon that command? Because God had spoken. That was his reason; that was his conviction. It was enough for him, he needed no more. But his conviction of the unchangeableness and truth of the moral laws of God would have rendered such an announcement, under the circumstances, to him at least *morally* intelligible. It mattered not that what was foretold was altogether unratified by any past experience. In the burning plains of Central Asia, the idea of an universal Deluge may well have seemed the wildest of imaginations; a thousand years, at least, of human history had already passed, and there had been nothing like it. Nature seemed to be unvarying in her movements: the sun rose and set, the seasons succeeded each other, the generations of living beings appeared and passed away: there was a limited, and so to call it, a regulated variety, traversing this reign of a discernible and pervading order; but as yet there was nothing that met the senses to warrant the expectation of a vast and overwhelming shock or catastrophe. Why should it be otherwise hereafter? Why should this accumulated experience go for nothing? why should the sense of security which it so amply warranted be succeeded by apprehensions of a disaster to which, as yet, the annals of the world afforded no parallel?

The answer was, Because God had spoken. Who that believes in a really Living God can plead the observed invariability of nature against the declared Will of the Author of nature? After all, this invariability, so to call it, appeals rather to the imagination than to the reason. The imagination becomes so accustomed to it, so moulded by it, that it undergoes a certain distress at

[1] Gen. vi. 13-18.

the thought of its violent interruption; but reason, true reason, is ever mindful of the limits which bound even her widest observations. Because we observe a continuing sequence of similar effects, it does not follow as a certainty, it is only a high presumption, strong in proportion to the range of our observation, that these effects will continue indefinitely. We are not really in possession of knowledge respecting any secret necessity rooted in the nature of things, which makes it certain that they must continue; and if we believe that the Mighty Author of nature is really alive, and that He is a Moral Being, and not merely a Force, or an Intelligence; and that as a Moral Being He may have grave reasons for disturbing all this physical and social symmetry which encircles us, we shall not distrust Him if He tells us that He means to do so. So it was with Noah: he was moved with fear, with a reasonable and a religious fear. He did not treat the warning he had received as if it had been only an omen, appealing to his superstition: he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

The event in which Noah believed before it came was appealed to in a later age by St. Peter, as furnishing a reason for believing in a still future and greater catastrophe. St. Peter is writing at the very close of his life, and already a sufficient time had elapsed since the Ascension of our Lord to allow for the formation of doubts respecting His Second Coming, doubts which were based upon the seeming unchangeableness of the world and of the laws of life. "Where is the promise of His Coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation?"[1] The Apostle reminds those who argued thus that time has no meaning for the Eternal God, and that to apply our notions of the difference between greater and less portions

[1] 2 St. Pet. iii. 4.

of it to His Majestic Providences is to forget that there is simply no such thing as succession in His unbegun, unending Life. "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."[1] But if Christ's delay meant nothing but His long-suffering, the unchanging order of the world could not be urged as a reason for disbelief in the catastrophe of a future judgment, because the past history of the world already contained at least one eminent example of such a catastrophe. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."[2] In other words, water had been the instrument by which the surface of the earth was moulded, and one of the constituent elements of its well-being and productiveness; yet at the creative word of God, from being a servant and a blessing, it became an overmastering force and scourge. What had been, might yet be; another element had yet a work to do in God's providence; and neither the lapse of years nor the regularity of the observed order of nature were any real reasons for presuming that the final catastrophe would not come at last. "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."[3]

Nay, it is very possible that, with a larger knowledge than that which we at present possess, we might be able to extend the argument by additional illustrations. Some years ago it was usual to refer solely to the period of the Deluge the animal remains which have been discovered in caverns or beneath the surface of the earth. But more recent science urges that they imply a higher antiquity, and are found under circumstances for which no universal

[1] 2 St. Pet. iii. 8. [2] Ib. 5, 6. [3] Ib. 7.

flood would sufficiently account. It may be so. Is there anything in the text of the Bible which obliges us to narrow down to six thousand years, or in any way to stint the measure of the world's antiquity, short of admitting its absolute eternity? On the contrary, between the record of the original creative act and the subsequent description of a gradual process by which, through successive periods,—"days" they are called,—the world was brought into its present state, there is room for a measureless interval or series of intervals. And if this be so, who shall say that many of the animal—it may be some of the "human"—remains which are now pointed to as hostile or at least embarrassing to the faith of Christians, are, after all, proofs and relics of some bygone catastrophes, of which, previous to the creation of the present order of things, this globe has been the scene, and by which ages of probation accorded to moral beings who have preceded us men, were, by the sentence of the Great Judge, violently closed? It is true that we are here altogether in the region of pure hypothesis; but, I submit that there is at least nothing in Revelation which necessarily contradicts it; while, if it be true, it yields support to the argument of the Apostle, and it justifies the generous faith of the Patriarch.

Not that Noah's faith had anything to do with such cosmical speculations. Religious men may be glad to harmonise their convictions with the advancing but shifting and often inconsistent conclusions of human knowledge. But the foundation of their faith is one and invariable. They believe that He Who made the world can control it; and when His purpose is clear to them, they do not allow themselves to lose sight of it only because their imaginations are powerfully impressed by the spectacle of a settled and common order of phenomena or institutions. They are therefore independent

of scientific arguments, without being indifferent to them; they walk by faith and not by sight. They are quite certain that, whatever difficulties may be urged against His declared Will at the moment, God will in the long-run justify Himself to man, and will vindicate the wisdom of those who in a day of trial and darkness have taken Him at His Word.

3. For a third point to be observed in Noah is his perseverance under difficulties. His faith was a practical principle, and it upheld him in the face of serious discouragements.

(*a.*) To begin with, he might easily have said to himself that there could be no real necessity for his personally exerting himself; that the threatened disaster would scarcely touch one who was already 480 years of age; that it would be enough to warn his children of what was coming when he himself would probably have entered upon his rest. Why should he rouse himself in advanced life to so great an effort as that which was required of him, instead of leaving it to be undertaken by younger hands? The answer in his conscience was, that God had said, not to others but to him: "Build thou an ark of gopher-wood."

(*β.*) Again, he might naturally have dwelt upon the great mechanical and constructive difficulties of the undertaking. It is not to be supposed that these were left to be discovered for the first time by modern criticism. How could such an ark be built, so as to secure at once space and safety? How could it be provisioned, lighted, warmed? How would the several animals be gathered so as to enter it? how would it be possible to preserve them under conditions of weather and temperature so unlike their own? And then when would the scourge have passed? and how would it be possible to enter again upon the earth as a solitary colonist, amid

the traces of so gigantic a desolation? Well may Noah's heart have sunk within him. Yet, he knew, God had said to him, "Build thou an ark of gopher-wood," and he had only to obey.

(γ.) Once more. Noah had to begin his work, and to continue it, not merely without active support and sympathy, but under the eye of a public opinion, not so much hostile as contemptuously cynical. What was this extraordinary outlay of labour and skill? what was its purpose and meaning? how was it other than the crotchet of a visionary and a fanatic? Did he really think that his fancies would become true, and that the settled order of nature as well as the civilisation and progress of human life were going to be buried beneath the flood which he dreamt of navigating? Was every one else wrong while he was right? was his private information (if such it was) to be weighed against the collective experience and judgment of mankind? How they must have mocked at the entire undertaking! how naturally must they, in their aversion to the idea and object, have revenged themselves on the form and appearance! What airy criticisms must have been lavished on it in its earliest rudimentary shape, on each detail which was supplied to it, on its complete structure! what delicate and yet bitter comments on its uselessness, its ugliness, its utter opposition to the whole current of contemporary thought and feeling! How, too, some of the more liberal critics would have endeavoured, as if in scornful and condescending pity, to enter, although remotely and for a moment, into the strange hallucinations that could have produced it,—as if surveying from afar a mental curiosity, which only did not move their anger because it ministered so abundantly to their amusement! And then with what satisfaction and complacency would they have betaken themselves anew to the life against which it was a protest and a warning, as to that

which was warranted by the common sense and judgment of the time, and by a force of custom and sentiment which, as the world grew older, was daily gathering new strength and empire. Our Lord has said that what took place then is an anticipation of what will be on the eve of the Last Judgment: "As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married and were given in marriage, until the day came that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."[1]

Yes, there was a delay of 120 years, but the threatened judgment came at last. "The flood came and destroyed them all." Whether it was strictly universal or something less than universal; whether it covered Ararat without covering, for instance, the Himalayas; whether it can be explained by any combination of known causes or only by supernatural ones;—these are important questions, but they do not touch the moral interest of the narrative, they would only lead us away from it. The judgment came. It came to vindicate the Morality and Sovereignty of God; it came to justify Noah, and to condemn the generation which rejected him. It came to demonstrate the folly and emptiness of all the glitter and order of that ancient civilisation; the irreverence and falsehood of that opinion which seemed at the time so well founded and so strong. There must have been a day—an hour of uttered surprise, alarm, struggle, agony, despair—when this was realised. Poets and painters have endeavoured to portray it. But as the mind dwells on any vast picture of human agony, the heart grows sick and the head giddy. In that buried multitude, no doubt, there were degrees of responsibility and guilt, known to and weighed by the Eternal Justice. The Apostle hints as much in a significant expression,[2] which

[1] St. Luke xvii. 26, 27.

[2] 1 St. Pet. iii. 19, 20 compared with iv. 6.

apparently implies that on the descent of our Lord's Human Soul into the place of the departed there was a compensatory preaching at least to some of the imprisoned spirits of the antediluvian world. But, the general result is a contrast between an overwhelming judgment and a signal mercy—a judgment provoked by forgetfulness of the law and knowledge of God, and a mercy awarded to faith in His word, which was not sacrificed to false and narrow views of duty, or to baseless misgivings, or to the corrupt and corrupting opinion of the day.

What Noah's work really and mainly foreshadowed would have been obscure at the time; but we look back upon it from a vantage ground, which enables us to do it justice. Every Christian must see, in the labour and temporal salvation of Noah, the shadow of a greater toil and a more complete deliverance. Looking to Jesus Christ, humanity in its wretchedness and yet in its hope might use in a deeper sense the words of Lamech: "This Same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands." Like Noah, Jesus Christ was a preacher of Righteousness; He preached a higher and broader Righteousness than man knew before; but then, by His Passion and Death and gifts of grace, He robed man in it, and made His Revelation tolerable to human weakness by making its substance a gift to faith.[1] And as Noah built an ark for the saving of his house, so did our Lord build His Church to be the home of His followers, with the promise that against it "the gates of Heli should not finally prevail." His teaching, His example, His works of mercy and of grace, His bitter Passion and Death, His Resurrection from the tomb and Ascent to Heaven, were all steps in this mighty work; the Divine Architect shed His very life-blood in the labour of construction. And at length Pentecost came, and the Eternal

[1] Heb. xi. 1.

Spirit welded all into a consistent and enduring whole; and as the races and sexes and degrees of men passed within it at the heavenly call, lo! there was neither Greek nor Jew, neither male nor female, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ was all and in all.[1] And although, since those earlier days, the passions and errors of men have raised walls of partition within the Divine Fabric over and above the "stories" which He ordered to be made in it,[2] yet these most assuredly will not always last; they are human, while the Ark itself is Divine. Even now it floats upon the waters, upon the vast ocean of human opinion and society; and we, without any merit of our own, but of His free grace and mercy, have been permitted to enter it. Over us was uttered the prayer that "the Everlasting God, Who of His Great Mercy did save Noah and his family in the Ark from perishing by water," would look upon, wash, and sanctify us; that being delivered from His wrath we might be "received into the Ark of Christ's Church, and being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, might so pass through the waves of this troublesome world, that finally we might come to the land of Everlasting Life."[3] We may, of course, if we will, plunge again into the waters; but we have only ourselves to thank if the Ark of the true Noah does not land us at the last on the Mount of God.

It may be useful to insist upon one or two practical conclusions which are suggested to us by the life and work of Noah.

It suggests, first of all, a particular form of duty, which at certain times in the world's history may press very heavily on the conscience of public men whether in Church or State; and, at certain turns in life, upon all of us, however private and retired our place and work

[1] Col. iii. 11; Gal. iii. 28. [2] Gen. vi. 16. [3] Baptismal Service.

may be. I mean the duty which may arise upon our seeing, or believing that we see, more or less clearly into a future which has to be provided for, or provided against. Indeed, to endeavour to look forward and provide is a part of the work of those who are charged with the maintenance and support of large public interests. It is their business to observe the direction in which things are moving, the forces which are coming to the front, the combinations or separations of forces which may be fairly anticipated, the general result that will emerge from and succeed the state of things with which they are actually conversant. Here, as elsewhere, to seek knowledge is to learn, at any rate, something; and God teaches us through our natural powers of observation and reflection, as well as in other and higher ways. Here, as elsewhere, to pray to know enough to be able to do God's Will in our day and generation, is to be answered; and, it may be, to have to anticipate deliberately much to which we would willingly be blind. Such a habit of looking forward, if its motive be higher than a speculative curiosity, will not interfere with the duties of the present hour; nor will it militate against the general temper of trustful resignation, which, in those who see furthest and deepest, is ever ready to leave its hopes and fears in the Hands of God. In private and worldly concerns, such foresight is not often either undervalued or neglected. No man continues to invest his money in an undertaking recommended by an imposing prospectus and board of directors, if beneath its fair promises and apparent prosperity he can clearly see at work the causes of coming bankruptcy. But where the interests of others are only or chiefly concerned, it being probable that the man himself will have passed from the scene before his anticipations are realised, it is possible for him to find himself in Noah's position thus far;—that he guesses a danger, a catastrophe, which

is hidden from the sight of his contemporaries, and which imposes on him the plain duty of preparing to meet it.

Then comes his trial. Will he bestir himself to obey the behests of his conviction, or will he indolently fold his hands and let things take their course? Will he say to himself, "After all, this is no particular concern of mine; it is the concern of everybody. Why should I be compelled to put myself out of my way in a matter that interests hundreds of other people as much as it interests me? Why should I be taxed, heavily taxed, on the score of my farsightedness, while others can go on easily and quietly, with a perfectly good conscience, only because they are too unobservant or too inert to see, or to try to see, beyond the next turn in the road? I will let things take their course; there is no necessity on my part for a chivalry which will be mocked at till it is justified by events, and which, even if events do justify it, will soon be forgotten."

Will he reason thus, or will he reflect that knowledge, insight, farsightedness, if they really exist and are felt to exist, constitute responsibility; that, even if he would, a man who sees further and knows more than others cannot be as others, morally, and before God or before men; that together with knowledge there comes, to a certain extent, and within the area which it covers, a forfeiture of that particular species of liberty which is a moral right of ignorance? Will he reason thus, and act upon his reasoning? My brethren, it is a critical question; possibly for the generation, the country, the Church to which he belongs, but certainly and under any circumstances for himself.

Can any one with a heart think without sorrow of that King of France whose reign covers the greater part of the last century, and who spans the interval which connects the Court of the Great Monarch with the reign

of the Bourbon who died upon the scaffold? Few things in history are more piteous than the contrast between a boyhood of much interest and promise and an advanced life of abject, systematised dissipation. Yet Louis XV. was not wanting in penetration; and the gay revelries of Versailles did not wholly blind or deafen him to sights and sounds which might have convinced a less observant ruler that the fountains of the great deep of national life were breaking up, and that a new order of things was imminent. Allowing for the difficulties of a traditional position such as his, may we not believe that an earnest and well-considered effort to improve the condition and assert the rights of the people, in the middle of the century, might have saved France from the torrents of blood in which the inevitable Revolution was baptized? Yet Louis XV. passed away, enervated morally and physically by pleasures which ministered only to the satisfaction of the hour, while the mutterings of the approaching storm were falling on his dying ear, and his last and deepest convictions became embodied in words which were too surely verified: "After us the deluge."

Nor can we walk the streets of Oxford, and know anything of the history of the buildings which meet our eyes, without encountering another illustration of the matter before us. During the two centuries which preceded the Reformation there were men in England who felt that a change of some kind was coming, and that it was their duty to prepare for it. They could not read history with our eyes; they could not look into the future as we look back upon the past; they knew not whether Reform or Revolution was before them. But at least, come what might, it could not but be well to gather and cultivate the highest learning of the time under the guidance and stimulus of Religion; and it was to this provident care of theirs that we owe the foundation of some of the

noblest colleges in Oxford. It may be feared that the highest aim and desire of their great legacy will not be handed on to the generations that will follow us; and yet it may be the duty and privilege of our day, under other yet not altogether unlike circumstances, and on a humbler scale, to leave at least one modern institution in Oxford where human learning will still be blessed by Christ, when we of this century shall have gone to our account.

From the State and Education it is natural to pass to the Church. Nearly forty years have now elapsed since a few of the purest and loftiest spirits that ever breathed the air of this place saw in the suppression of some Irish Sees a warning to prepare for more serious emergencies. They, too, might have said, that as private clergymen and teachers they might well let things take their course, or leave the work of struggle and of protest to those who were set in the high places of the Church. But their insight into the future, such as it was, was their own; and they could not transfer to others the responsibility of possessing it. They knew that the real cause of present disaster, and the most serious menace of future danger, lay not in any exceptional irreligion on the part of the State, but in the fact that Churchmen were at best half-hearted in professing their Creed: Samson's locks had been shorn, and who could wonder that the Philistines were upon him? If the Church of England was to be loved and worked for in the years to come, it must be by men who recognised in her something nobler than the plaything and creature of Parliaments and Statesmen, something more than one of many human organisations, designed to promote co-operation among believers in Christ. If she was not a Branch of Christ's Body, her sacred language was a studied unreality; if her Sacraments were not channels of Divine Grace, were not their administrators like the heathen augurs of old, who could

not but smile as they passed each other in the Forum? These men understood that a Church, to be upheld, must be believed in; but they would have failed, and deservedly, if they had endeavoured to re-invigorate a faith which they themselves held to be untrue. In their belief that, whatever came of it, they must go forward, in their simple sincerity, lay the secret of their strength. Out of the old materials which were ready to their hands, they set themselves to build an ark of fresh and strong convictions; they laboured, by all the avenues to public thought and feeling that they could command, to persuade their contemporaries to mean the Creed which daily passed their lips, and to act upon it.

It may be true that that Movement has been pushed to some unwarranted and lamentable consequences; that its original principle has been, in some cases, caricatured or perverted; that it has indirectly created some bewilderment and confusion. What is this but to say that its originators and conductors were human, and that they have enjoyed no guaranteed exemption from human liability to error? But look at it generously and as a whole,—look at it as its opponents, I venture to say, will look at it, when in the clear daylight of history it can be viewed without any disturbing rays of intervening passion; and it will, it must be said to have saved the Church of England from impending death, either by spiritual hysteria or by spiritual atrophy. It has poured a tide of life—the life of earnest conviction and of earnest work—through all the arteries and veins of the Church of this land; and it is year by year adding to the spiritual force which alone can enable Christians to face the speculative or political anxieties of the future. He who exclaimed from Bagley, forty years ago—

> "The flood is round thee, but thy towers as yet
> Are safe,"[1]

[1] *Lyra Apostolica*, No. cl. "Oxford," by the Rev. J. Keble.

at the sight of Oxford, foresaw clearly what was coming. And now that he is gone to his rest, it is not too much to say that he has done more perhaps than any in these last times to enable us of a younger generation to look forward to the rising flood, if not without fear on the score of our own possible disloyalty, yet certainly without misgiving as to the general and final issue to the Kingdom of Christ in England.

It is easy to exaggerate the importance of the age we live in; it is a subtle inclination of self-love which leads us to do so. Yet after allowing for this propensity or weakness, we can scarcely doubt that the present is a period of exceptional importance, whether to the State or to Religion, both in England and Europe. Scarcely a year passes without the crash of some old throne or constitution; and around us are taking place, silently but with astonishing rapidity, vast political and social changes, which cannot but lead to much besides in the years immediately to come. To be entering on the full powers of life in such days as these may be a privilege or a misery, as a man has or has not the heart to feel their moral solemnity. Alas! for those whose conduct at such a time exposes noble names and ancient institutions to a condemnation, which will make it at least difficult to link the past with the future. Alas! for those who can see clearly and far into that which is hidden from most of us, yet who enjoy their keensightedness, if not with a reckless levity, yet without feeling any generous desire to lend a hand towards making an Ark of safety for truth and goodness. For, on a great scale or a small, there will be, there is, some share in the work of Noah to be taken by all of us; and they who work most in silence and unobserved, may have at the last the largest share in the blessing of the great Patriarch.

And, leaving public interests and duties, there is one

sense in which each one of us must build his Ark, and that quickly. To every man death is the Deluge, and life is the time given him wherein to prepare to meet it. If we would not sink beneath the waters, we must build our Ark; and we have much less than the 120 years of Noah in which to build it. What if this brief and precious period is passing from us while we stand aside, watching the efforts of others, either in moody indifference, or in scornful contempt! What if—as St. Augustine said of some Christians in his day, whose natural energy furthered Christ's kingdom, while their hearts were not enlisted in His cause—our part is only that of the mercenary Cainites, whose services the Patriarch enlisted to build the Ark, into which, when the day of trouble came, they would not enter! Let us look into this matter, if it be for the first time, this Lent. Let us lose no more days in setting to work, and let us take heed how we set to work. The ark of Salvation, says St. Augustine again, must be built by the Christian out of the wood of Christ's Cross. We cannot ourselves furnish either the design or the material; but if God will not save us by ourselves, He certainly will not save us without ourselves, without our corresponding, that is to say, with His purposes of grace and mercy. Yet if He is with us, it matters little, although the clouds are sensibly darker than they were, and the fountains of the great deep are already breaking up. It matters little, though all be submerged before our eyes beneath the rising tide, if we know and are sure, upon the strength of His Word, that after a brief voyage upon the waters, our feet will rest upon the Eternal Mountain, and we shall have our part in that mighty Thanksgiving which will never end.

SERMON XII.

THE ONE SALVATION.[1]

Acts iv. 12.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

THESE words were uttered by St. Peter, as representing the young Church of Christ, when, for the first time after her foundation, she stood fairly face to face with the hostile power of the world. On the day of Pentecost she had encountered some playful or scornful mockery, which was silenced when Peter came forward and explained the true cause of the occurrences which excited it. But when the cripple was healed on the Mount of the Temple, the Jewish world roused itself in earnest. The miracle was performed in the most public place in Jerusalem; and immediately afterwards St. Peter had addressed a large multitude which gathered round him. He pointed out that Jesus, by the might of His Name, was the real worker of the miracle; that His exaltation and power was in accordance with prophecy; that it was a fact of the utmost moment to every one of his hearers. Hereupon three classes of persons became alarmed. The priests saw in the Apostles of Christ dangerous rivals to their own office and authority. The Sadducees—the unbelieving section of the literary class—were angered at the public discussion of a miracle, which, if true, condemned their own denial of a resurrection, and which they would gladly have buried beneath a contemptuous

[1] Preached (on behalf of the "Bishop of London's Fund") in St. Paul's Cathedral, on the Fifth Sunday after Easter, May 18, 1873.

silence. The Captain of the Temple, as the guardian of public order—a sort of chief commissioner of police—was apprehensive that the excitement might lead to disturbances. These several personages and classes might well have taken the miracle to heart; they might at least have asked the question why it had so impressive a significance for an increasing section of the people. But questions of this kind are not often considered in moments of passion. The prejudices of the past, the fears and resentments of the hour, carried the day; and they cast the Apostles into prison.

This done, it became necessary that the Apostles should be examined in court—the Court of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was solemnly convoked; it had, according to the law of Deuteronomy, to decide the point, whether the Apostles were to be regarded as true prophets or as seducers to idolatry.[1] The Court knew that the cripple had been healed by the Apostles—not in the Name of Jehovah, but in the Name of Jesus. And this seemed to establish the charge of idolatry; since nothing could be plainer to the Jewish mind than the distinction between Jesus the Crucified Prophet and the Almighty Jehovah. The first question, therefore, which the Court asked the Apostles was, By what power or by what name have ye done this? The Court, you will observe, does not enter upon the general question of the Apostle's teaching; it asks only Who had been invoked to work the miracle. And St. Peter, standing before men who had his life in their hands, speaks directly to the point: "Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done unto the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you and to all the people of Israel that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised

[1] Deut. xiii. 1-5.

from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the Stone Which was set of nought by you builders, Which is become the head of the corner."[1] And then he adds, "Neither is there the salvation[2] in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

I.

Now here St. Peter first of all makes a positive assertion. He says that Jesus Christ—His Name, that is, He Himself—brings salvation; he says (if we are to keep quite close to the sense of the original) that Jesus is the cause or ground on which the Salvation rests.[3] It is natural to ask, What kind of salvation?

(*a.*) St. Peter might have glanced at first of all, although he could not have meant chiefly, salvation from physical pain and discomfort. The circumstance which led to this speech of the Apostle's was the recent healing of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The question was, Who had really healed the cripple? who had saved him from those years of misery and want?

The judges on the bench, like the people in the street, thought that the Apostles had worked the cure of the cripple by some magical trick, or sleight-of-hand, or occult peculiarity of character. St. Peter insists that the Apostles had nothing more to do with it than this:—they had put the real cause of the miracle in motion; they had called on the Name of Jesus. Jesus Who had been crucified; Jesus, now hidden from mortal eyes, but seated on His Throne in heaven, was the real Author of the cure. It was just as much His work as any one of the miracles wrought in the days of His earthly life had been. The Apostles were only instruments in the hand of the true

[1] Acts iv. 8-11. [2] ἡ σωτηρία. [3] ἐν ᾧ, cf. Meyer, *in loc.*

Workman. It was unendurable to them that any man should think that by their own inherent power or holiness they had made the cripple whole.[1]

Now this healing of the cripple, wrought by Jesus through the agency of the Apostles, was on the face of it a physical salvation. Bodily pain and discomfort, continued through many years, unless it be transfigured by patience and resignation into a consummate blessing, may crush out its very heart and hope from a human life. And anyhow, pain is a disorder and anomaly in nature. When it is inevitable, we may be sure that God has some high and merciful purpose in inflicting it. When it is not inevitable, our business is, if we can do so, to cure it. Our Lord worked then by the agency of the Apostles what He works now by the generous hearts, and kind hands, and cultivated understandings of those whom He guides, in hospitals and elsewhere, to the relief and cure of bodily pain. His precepts, His charity, His unseen but energetic Spirit, is the source of the best and noblest inspirations of our modern philanthropy, even where the cause is unrecognised or unsuspected. And as the result is, in its degree, a salvation, so the inspiring force is the grace and charity of the Saviour.

(*β.*) But the great word "the salvation" does not, we must feel, make itself very easily at home in such an association as this. Bodily pain is bearable; it may even be changed into an instrument of the highest blessing. But there are evils from which men and nations must be saved at any cost. And when St. Peter talked of "the salvation" in the Court of the Sanhedrin, he would have meant and been understood to mean something much greater in itself, and much wider in its range of application than any bodily cure; something of which a bodily cure was a mere figure and presentiment. Salvation was

[1] Acts iii. 12.

already a consecrated word in the language of Israel. It had been so for centuries. It meant very generally the deliverance of Israel from outward and inward enemies; it meant the deliverance of Israel as a whole; it meant especially a national salvation. That was the point of St. Peter's reference to Psalm cxviii., which was composed for the first observance of the Feast of Tabernacles in the newly-rebuilt Temple, after the return from the Babylonish captivity. St. Peter quotes the famous lines in which Israel, lately restored to the land of his ancestors, is spoken of as a "stone which the builders rejected, and which had been made the head of the corner."[1] The new Temple would have naturally suggested the figure. Israel, rejected as a down-trodden race by the proud nations who aspired to build up the future of the Eastern world, had been lifted by God into a place of honour; Israel was to be in some way the corner-stone of that temple of souls which God would build for the future of humanity. The deeper Jewish commentators saw that the words must really apply, not to Israel as a whole, since the nation had morally fallen too low for such high distinction, but to the expected Messiah, its ripe product and its splendid Representative. And accordingly, our Lord Jesus Christ, just after His public entry into Jerusalem, when the people had saluted Him in other words of this Psalm, applied to Himself what was said about the corner-stone. He was Himself the corner-stone; and Israel, in rejecting Him, was repeating the crime of the Gentiles in rejecting Israel.[2] When, then, St. Peter, standing before the Court of the Sanhedrin, said that Jesus was "the Stone set at nought by you builders," he was following His Blessed Master's guidance. It had

[1] Ps. cxviii. 22; cf. Isa. xxviii. 16.

[2] St. Matt. xxi. 42; St. Mark xii. 10; St. Luke xx. 17; cf. Rom. ix. 33; 1 St. Pet. ii. 7.

been Christ's own way of saying as vividly as He could to His countrymen, that although rejected and crucified, He was the true Hope and Deliverer of Israel. And thus the salvation of which St. Peter speaks was the salvation which Messiah was to bring. It was the salvation to which Israel was looking forward. It was the salvation of which the healing of the cripple had been a figure. Israel was the real cripple after all, and his rulers knew it. As a political body Israel was crippled. The Roman conqueror had broken Israel's limbs, and the nation lay on the soil of Palestine, bound, prostrate, powerless. The leading men of Israel were asking the question, Who will save us? And adventurers were starting up, eager to trade upon that painful anxiety, eager to raise the standard of revolt against the Roman power, or to promise some visionary relief in a distant land. Israel was yet more crippled morally, spiritually. The old burning devotion of prophets and psalmists had died away, and in its place there were now crystallised sects; Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians; men whose religion was a thing of phrase and form; men whose religion was a cold negation of all the unseen realities; men whose religion consisted in a mercenary and servile truckling to the heathen state power of the time. The old heart of Israel, which had made it what it had been in ages past, was eaten out. Who could save it?

There were pretenders and advisers in abundance. Israel might be saved, by this or that Rabbi, by this or that line of political action, by such and such influences, by such and such intrigues. So it was said; but the Apostle knew that what Israel wanted was not new leaders, nor yet new political circumstances. The first would be impotent, and it was too late for the second. Still less did the nation need the experiments of doctors who had tried and failed: Israel really wanted a new life. The salvation must begin not from without but from

within. The fabric of national thought, national hope, national convictions must be reconstructed. And before this reconstruction could take place, the natural directors of the work must stoop before the eyes of men to a great humiliation. They had just now thrown aside with contumely and scorn, nay, they had done their best to crush into fragments the one Stone which was indispensable to their success. Him Whom they would have buried beneath the dust for ever, God had raised up to majesty and honour; and Israel must learn to make the crucified Prophet of Nazareth the very corner-stone of the temple of its thoughts and hopes, if its doom was to be even delayed. The political implied a spiritual salvation; the outward, an inward one. And the only Saviour Who could deal with the spirits of men—who could begin really from within—was He Who had just now healed the cripple. Israel must be saved by Him—or perish.

(γ.) And so we are led on to perceive a third and altogether deeper sense in St. Peter's words. Salvation really means here—it can mean no less—the rescuing from moral ruin and death of the separate souls of men. The political salvation of Israel required, as we have seen, a spiritual salvation. And the spiritual salvation of the nation as a whole implied that of its several members. Israel was not a real thing existing apart from individual Jews. There is not really any such nation as England apart from Englishmen. We must not mistake for substantial realities the abstractions which we employ to express thought conveniently and concisely. A nation consists of a number of human beings, who for reasons of race or reasons of geography act together in public matters. But before God, a nation is only so many millions of souls, each one of which is on his separate probation. Therefore, in order to save a nation, the individuals who compose it, or the majority of them, must be saved; that is to say,

they must be delivered from ignorance, delivered from moral bondage, delivered from the ruin which follows wilful sin here and in the world beyond the grave.

You may do a great deal with a multitude of men, short of saving it, although you deal with such a multitude only in the block. You may protect it against outward enemies; you may endow it with new institutions; nay, you may enrich it with new ideas, with new enthusiasms, with new modes of feeling, with new traditions of social and intellectual life. But to *save* men is quite another matter. If you would take them out of the strong gripe of evil and falsehood, and translate them into the realm of goodness and truth; if you would change their inward dispositions as well as their outward habits; if you would make the guilty past as though it had not been; if you would cut off the entail of its penal consequences; if you aim at making them, in the language of Scripture, "new creatures;" you will have to treat with them one by one, to reckon with each separate soul, as if it were alone in the universe, and there were none other in existence. The soul of man is intrinsically too great and awful, too complex and magnificent a thing to be dealt with as one animal in a drove of cattle, as one pebble in a heap which is being shovelled away. The soul of the weakest woman, of the youngest child, has that in it, or rather is that, in the awful solitude of its indestructible life, which demands all the respect, all the concentration of purpose, all the energy and resource, whether of thought or charity, that can possibly be given to it. Has not the Maker of us all made each one of our souls unlike, in some respects, any other in His universe? Did not the Redeemer of men, Who gave Himself a ransom for all, yet, as St. Paul felt, die for each with the same deliberate concentration of purpose as if He had to die only for one?[1] Does not the

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

Eternal Spirit, by Whom the whole Church is governed and sanctified, yet dwell in the fulness of His majesty in each regenerate and living spirit? And do we not trace the same principle when we would assist each other in the truest way which is permitted us? Does not the mother who would really help her child take it apart from other children, and speak to it, as if all her love and interest was concentrated upon it alone, in order to convince it that she has its case fully in view, and is thinking of none else while she speaks to it? Does not the Christian pastor know that the words which he addresses in the pulpit to multitudes are powerless as compared with the words which he speaks privately to individual men; when, standing as one soul face to face with another soul—contemplating all the meaning, all the blessedness, all the awfulness of a separate, indestructible life—he grapples with the particular wants, fears, dangers, of his fellow-man, of his fellow-sinner, beneath the Eye of their common Lord? When men talk, as you may sometimes hear them talk, using what I cannot but think a shallow and irreverent phrase, about "influencing the masses," they seem to think that the human family is, after all, only a huge lump of plastic matter which may be shaped or moulded at pleasure this way or that by some outward influence. Our Lord dealt with a Peter, a Mary Magdalen, a Thomas, as if there were no other beings in existence, although He by no means prescribed or neglected those less powerful influences which affect collected multitudes of men; and salvation in its deepest, nay, in its one legitimate sense, is the rescuing of single souls from present sin and from future misery.

Salvation in that sense was no monopoly of Israel. What was Israel that it should claim for itself the whole power of the saving Name? The final, the absolute Religion, could not but be also universal. The question

of the Gentiles had not yet been raised, as it was a few years after; but there was the broad commission of Christ to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Therefore, this deepest sense of the word salvation has all the value now, for you and for me, that it had for St. Peter and the first Christians. Some of you, through no merit of your own, but only through your Saviour's grace and mercy, made, as you were in your Baptism, members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven—may have never broken away from that state of privilege and blessedness. You may still hold on to the Pierced Hand which then locked itself in yours that it might lead you across the bleak deserts of life, to your Eternal Home. But with the majority it is otherwise. The "old infection of nature," as Christian theology calls it, some perverse will, some strong, overmastering passion, gaining strength with years, will often, as Plato could say, grasp the reins which should be held by the illuminated reason, and drive desperately like Phaethon down the steep of heaven, though it be into the abyss of sensuality or of crime. It is, alas! no rare catastrophe. Sometimes it is proclaimed in visible profligacy and worldly ruin; more often it mantles its shame under the folds of an unforfeited respectability. But at last Phaethon reaches the floor of hell: the soul lies before God paralysed—dead. In that utter misery and degradation, all sight of necessary truth is lost: the eye of the soul is darkened. All pure affection is impossible: real love is killed out by the gross and incessant demands of sense. All strength of will for good is gone. The will is enslaved; it is at the beck and call of each solicitation to evil. No voice is heard in that loneliness and degradation save now and then a wild wail of agony sounding through the caverns of the deserted spirit and echoing despair. And thus a being who might have had companionship

with angels, feeds on the husks that the very swine of creation eat; the greatness of man's capacity is the measure of his ruin. Who will raise, who will save him? Ah! you may think it a dream, but it is true: now, as surely, as completely as eighteen centuries ago, Jesus Christ saves men even from depths like these. Now, as then, He washes out all the stains of a guilty past; now, as then, He turns back upon itself, with an incomparable union of tenderness and strength, the whole current of destiny. He gives new desires, new aims, new hopes, new enthusiasms; He inspires a hatred even for the garment spotted by the flesh; He renews, by His Spirit, little by little all that His enemy had destroyed; He brings forth His own enjewelled robe of Righteousness, and bids the soul, trembling with the joy of penitence, to sit, as the Apostle says, in heavenly places side by side with Himself.[1] There are men and women living who could assure you that this is no sentimental rhapsody; that it is a hard fact, of which they have themselves had experience. They have been at the very gates of eternal death, and have met One Who could and did save them, ay, to the uttermost.[2]

II.

Jesus can save: it is a matter of faith, and, thank God, it is a matter of experience. But, the Apostle adds, "Neither is there the salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Had St. Peter lived among us now, would he, think you, have put the matter in this way? Would he not have avoided any appearance of comparison or rivalry between the Gospel and other religious systems? Would he not have said: "It is enough for me to proclaim that

[1] Eph. ii. 6; Col. ii. 12, 13. [2] Heb. vii. 25.

there is salvation in Christ; I do not know, I am not concerned to determine whether other prophets, other doctrines, other agencies can save? I do not wish to claim for Him any monopoly of saving power; I have no inclination to dispute the pretensions of Jewish rites or of Greek philosophies? No doubt there is much to be said for every religion in the world, and the professors of a religion have only to be sure that they are consistent; that they are careful to fashion their lives according to its law and the light of nature? It is enough for me to say that the religion of Christ will save you if you choose: I am not so illiberal as to maintain that you cannot be sure of salvation without it?"

Why did not St. Peter say this? Why did he state the very converse of it—"Neither is there the salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"?

It was because he had in his heart and on his lips, not a human speculation or theory, but, as he held, the Truth—the One, Final, Absolute Truth. The proof of that to his mind, the overwhelming proof, was the life and teaching of his Master, crowned, attested by the miracle—the recent, the certain, the unassailable miracle—of the Resurrection. God had spoken; and here was what He said. If St. Peter had felt himself to be only the representative of one among many human doctrines; if he had been bidding for popular favour towards a faith or a view of life which could be traced to no higher a source than some generous but human heart, or some inventive but fallible brain, then he would not have dared to say, "Neither is there salvation in any other." Error may pay sincere or splendid compliments to that which contradicts it; it has its successive moods of weak concession and of irrational obstinacy. Truth can only say firmly, tenderly, unvaryingly—"It is I Who save, whether the

intellect from falsehood, or the will from weakness and corruption. Neither is there salvation in any other."

And the Gospel has said this from the first. He, Who is its Author and its Object, with His Eye upon all the doctrines, all the speculations, all the religious systems and religious teachers which in successive ages have claimed the homage of the human heart, did not shrink from saying, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."[1] And His Apostles and Evangelists, catching the tremendous import of these words, repeat them in every variety of phrase and inference. "There is one Mediator between God and man," says St. Paul, with reference to certain Gnostic systems of many intermediate agents, "the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a Ransom for all."[2] "He is the Propitiation for our sins," says St. John, who is thinking of the rites of Judaism; "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[3] "Other foundation," says St. Paul, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."[4] "This is the record," says St. John, "that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."[5] "Though we or an angel from heaven," cries St. Paul, "preach any other doctrine unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."[6] "He that believeth the Son," says St. John, "hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."[7] The Ephesians, before their conversion, says St. Paul, were men "having no hope, and without God in the world."[8] "We know," exclaims St. John, "that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."[9] "Lord, to whom shall we

[1] St. John xiv. 6.
[2] 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.
[3] 1 St. John ii. 2.
[4] 1 Cor. iii. 11.
[5] 1 St. John v. 11, 12.
[6] Gal. i. 8.
[7] St. John iii. 36.
[8] Eph. ii. 12.
[9] 1 St. John v. 19.

go?" cries St. Peter to his Master; "Thou hast the words of eternal life."[1] "Neither is there the salvation in any other," proclaims St. Peter to his Master's executioners; "for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

There are, of course, many ways of saying this; but there is no mistaking the accent of tenderness which may be heard in the sternest language of the Gospel. The Apostles speak, not as dialecticians passionately contending for a logical victory, and riveting the charge of error upon their opponents; nor yet as men with a taste and aptitude for government, who claim the monopoly of truth and grace as a mighty instrument of moving and regulating the hearts of men. They speak as men who have found for themselves the secret of happiness, the secret of hope, the secret of life, the secret and warrant of salvation; and their highest ambition is that others should share the privilege.[2] They would rather appear to be uncharitable than be disloyal to that true and highest charity which "gives light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and guides the feet of wanderers into the way of peace."

When we affirm that there is salvation in none other than Jesus, we do not deny that other religions, besides Christianity, contain certain elements of truth. Of course they do. They would not last as they last if they did not. It is the element of truth in false religions which enables them to resist dissolution, and they possess this amount of invigorating truth in different degrees. But, then, error enters into their composition much more largely than truth does; and so, though such religions may within limits do a certain amount of good to their votaries in virtue of the truth which they hold, as it were, in solution, they cannot possibly save. No religion but that of

[1] St. John vi. 68. [2] 1 St. John i. 3; Rom. x. 1; Gal. iv. 19, 20.

Christ Jesus, God and Man, bridges over the chasm which yawns between earth and heaven; no other religion touches the human heart in all the depths of its corruption, or touches the Heart of God in all the boundlessness of His Charity. And therefore, "neither is there salvation in any other."

Again, when we affirm that Christianity alone can save, we do not deny that other agencies besides Christianity may improve mankind. In such improving agencies, promoted by noble-minded and disinterested men, this metropolis abounds. Philanthropic societies, literary societies, social and political organisations of all kinds may bring with them progress, elevation, improvement. Good government, sound education, the diffusion of useful knowledge, the influence of eminent men, the opportunities of social intercourse, the enthusiasm of common aims;—these things and the like do public services which I should be the last to dispute. But their influence is bounded by the horizon of this life. They aim at no effects beyond in the great Hereafter. They do not *save* us. They are not opponents of the Church of Christ. They are not even her rivals. They move in a totally different sphere of action. They have nothing really to say to the gravest side of human existence, to the deepest problems that can interest a thoughtful man. They leave us at a distance from our one true and dearest Friend; they leave us face to face with our worst enemies. They only embellish our outward life; they leave our real selves untouched. Who, asks St. Chrysostom, would think of spending his fortune in laying out an ornamental garden while his dwelling-house was an uninhabitable ruin? Brethren, believe it, improvement, elevation of tone, progress, are admirable things in their way, but they are not salvation. The one question which will interest every one of us a short century hence, when other human

beings have taken our places here, and we have passed away, will be, not whether we have been improved, but whether we have been saved.

III.

There can be no doubt that this conviction was in the first age, and has been since, a great motive power in urging men to promote the spread of Christianity. It was a motive only second in its urgency to the impulsive power of the love of Christ. A Christian who believes his faith knows that it is not merely an advantage to men to believe in Christ, but that it is a strict necessity. Under the stress of this knowledge he exerts himself to the utmost to propagate the Faith both at home and abroad. And it is this conviction which leads me to-night to urge you to do what you can to support the great enterprise of faith and charity, which, for practical purposes, but, perhaps, at some disadvantage in other ways, goes by the name of the Bishop of London's Fund. That title really describes an earnest effort to christianise London. Walk along the roads, and alleys, and lanes which stretch between this Cathedral and Stepney or Limehouse; go through the splendid streets and squares which rise on every side of you between Chelsea and Hampstead or Tyburn, and ask yourselves how many of those whom you pass, or who live right and left of you, know anything really of the One Saving Name. Well, there are many, thank God, who do know it. There are churches, and schools, and clergymen to witness to it; and, better still, there are thousands of Christian lives which show that it is still a power—a mighty power—among men. But what of the majority—for such I fear it is—of the men and women whom you meet as you walk along the streets? Either they are so altogether ignorant of our Lord, or He is to them so distant and intangible a shadow, that, for the practical

purposes of salvation, they might almost as well live in India or in Africa. And if this be so, whose is the responsibility? Is it theirs who only know His Name in the echo of a profane oath, or in the advertisement of an infidel lecture, or ours—ours—to whom, through no merit of our own, He has been made "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"?[1]

Ten years ago this charitable "Fund" was set on foot. Although it may not have realised all that was hoped by the late Bishop of London, it has done much. Some £437,000 have been raised and spent for the relief of the spiritual wants of the metropolis; and this sum has been met by other contributions amounting to little less than half a million. The result is that 84 churches have been built, and in most cases endowed, chiefly for the use of those classes of the people who cannot help themselves; some 30 parsonages in addition have been erected; while accommodation has been provided in Church schools for about 30,000 children. But the great effort of the fund is to have maintained, and to maintain at this moment, a large staff of clergymen and lay agents, whose work is to reach the many thousands that are in contact with no religious influences whatever. Workers of this kind are placed in mission stations in the most destitute parts of London. This is, in the highest sense, missionary work. I am not concerned to argue that all the work done has been as perfect, or all the success as decided, as we might wish; or that, here and there, as is inevitable in human things, there may not have been mistakes of administration or otherwise. But I say that, in presence of the gigantic needs of this great centre of population—of this metropolis, which, as an aggregate of human beings, exceeds any other, whether of the ancient or modern world—of this diocese, which, after deducting the thou-

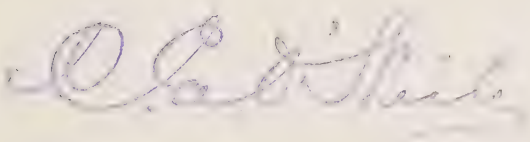
[1] 1 Cor. i. 30.

sands and tens of thousands that belong to the dioceses of Winchester and Rochester, still yields a population of more than two millions and a half;—in presence of this tragic mass of human interest, of ignorance and sin, of temptation and crime, of infidelity, sometimes frivolous, sometimes serious, often despairing in its misery; of the many thousands of souls that are lost and that might be saved, if only they could be placed in the way of salvation;—in presence of these forces, which must, if left alone, affect, in ways I need not sketch, and affect so powerfully, the best interests of England in the coming time;—in prospect of that eternity towards which, moment by moment, this vast torrent of life is hurrying forwards as to an irrevocable goal—it is unworthy of those who have themselves tasted aught of the Charity and Generosity of Christ our Lord to refuse to see, in this undertaking, a great attempt to carry forward His work—an attempt nobly and generously conceived, and, as I firmly believe, upon the whole generously and nobly executed. . . .

My Brethren, we have reached this year one of those crises which are inevitable in every undertaking of the kind. The first great impulse of charity has spent itself; and, after creating a number of claims and responsibilities, it threatens to die away, with a smile of self-approval, into feebleness or nonentity. Now the question is, whether these new responsibilities are to be disowned; whether we are to hold our hands and say that, looking to the immense work that would still have to be done, if London had already reached the limits of its future extension, an annual increase of 35,000 a year in the population of the diocese makes it hopeless to attempt to keep pace with the larger and more exacting demands that continually crowd upon us. Your Lordship[1] and the Committee of the

[1] The Bishop of London was present.

Fund have resolved to answer that question consistently with the courage and perseverance which have throughout marked the previous history of this great enterprise. The responsible directors of the Fund will go forward with what they have begun in the Name of Jesus Christ. And I dare to affirm that it is the duty of every Christian here to assist them to the utmost of his power, and to make the nature and needs of their work as widely known as possible. A generous effort will do the man who makes it, at some cost to himself, even more good than it will do to the cause for which I plead; and if you know what it is to have been saved yourselves at the cost of the Blood of the Son of God, you will not fail to exert yourselves in this, as in other ways, for the salvation of your brethren.



SERMON XIII.

LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE.[1]

PHILIPPIANS i. 9, 10.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge.

SUCH a passage as this, in to-day's Epistle, must ever be of great practical value to serious Christians. One of the gravest questions of the Christian life—a question perpetually recurring—is, what it is best to pray for. Happily for us, children of the Church, this question is to a great extent settled, and settled authoritatively. The Church of England teaches us prayers which have been hallowed, many of them, by the usage of some fourteen centuries or more. The use of our Prayer Book associates us with millions of Christians, who, with the same words on their lips, and the same hopes and aspirations in their hearts, have trodden the path of life, often under circumstances as unlike our own as the imagination can conceive, on their way to the home which we all hope to reach at last.

But although we can never thank God sufficiently for thus providing for our wants, we cannot, I suppose, conclude that all the needs of single souls are thus provided for. Every soul has a history of its own; its own hopes and fears, its own failures and conquests, its own inner record of love and suffering,—known partly to itself—known perfectly to God. The most earnest prayer

[1] Preached in the Chapel of King's College, London, on the Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity, Nov. 9, 1873.

is based upon, grows out of, this inward region of felt, yet only half-appreciated facts; and the wide and general language of the Church, which befits the whole kingdom of souls, and in a large but most true sense meets the broad representative needs of each, fails from the nature of the case to touch all that is peculiar to the necessities of the solitary spirit. Every living soul prays some prayers which no collect has ever fully anticipated. Every soul must own to some wants, some difficulties, some apprehensions, which no liturgy has at any rate put into exact shape. And sincere communion with the All-Seeing and the Eternal involves necessarily the constant effort to place the facts of the human spirit's secret life before Him as they are—whether human language is equal to the task, or whether, as is probable, much must be left to those inward motions of the Eternal Spirit, which, we are told, cannot be uttered in language.[1]

Now it is in this province of mental prayer (as it is called) that such an example as the Apostle's is peculiarly valuable. When St. Paul informs us what are the blessings which he would win for his flock by prayer, he gives us a regulating principle for many of our own private prayers. He does not prescribe the words. The words, and even the attending feelings, may, often will, take care of themselves. But he tells us in what direction the stream of entreaty is to move. And since sincere prayer must be based on sincere desire—and this is stimulated by our intimate apprehension of what is best for us—such rules for prayer as these are much more than rules for prayer; they are, by implication, schemes or ideals of what is best. Thus St. Paul is teaching us the law of true progress in the Christian life when he tells us for what he prays—"This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge."

[1] Rom. viii. 26.

I.

Here, see, first, what St. Paul takes for granted as the basis, the underlying substance, the raw material of the Divine life in the soul of man. "This I pray, that your love may abound." It is not "This I pray, that your knowledge may abound yet more and more in love"—but "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge." And this order of the ideas, need I say it, is by no means a rhetorical accident. Whenever in St. Paul's writings knowledge and love are put in competition with each other, the precedence is assigned to love. For as compared with knowledge, love is intrinsically a stronger thing; and it is worth more practically. To be knit to God by love is better religiously than to speculate about Him, however accurately, as an abstract existence. To enwrap other men, perhaps multitudes, in the flame of a passionate enthusiasm for private or public virtue, is better than to analyse in the solitude of a study rival systems of ethical or political truth. Each has its place, but love comes first; and if St. Paul said this, we may dare to say it was because the Divine inspiration which swayed him overruled the natural bent of his mind, and forced him to recognise the primacy of love. St. Paul, with all his passion, was, before everything else, a dialectician by nature; he bends here, as always, to the intrinsic force of things—let me rather say, to the genius of the Gospel. "Though he should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and had not charity, he was but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal." "Knowledge," he knew, "puffeth up; charity edifieth." "After that, in the wise providence of God, the world through philosophy knew not God; it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching"—the substance of that preaching was the Infinite Charity Himself—"to save them that believe."

"The philosophy of the world," he says, "is foolishness with God." "Charity," he maintains, "is even greater than the great graces of faith and hope;" how infinitely must it transcend knowledge![1]

It may indeed be objected that, if love is to exist at all, it must have an object, and that the loving soul must have some knowledge of this object. And reference may be made to St. Peter's precept, that Christians should give all diligence to add to their "faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity,"[2]—where charity is represented not as the foundation but as the crowning of the spiritual edifice. An examination of this deeply interesting passage might prove that the order of Christian attainments in it has no kind of reference to their succession in the growing life of the soul. Yet, were this otherwise, in placing faith at the head of the list, St. Peter is not really contradicting St. Paul. Faith and love, so distinct in our treatises on Christian ethics—nay, often in the pages and arguments of the New Testament, are in the living soul practically inseparable; just as in the living body the nervous and arterial systems are indissolubly blended, although for the purposes of science they must be studied apart. Yes! faith which worketh by love is the only faith worthy of the name;[3] the only faith, be well assured of it, which justifies the sinner. And if a soul loves, it loves because it already believes, because by one spiritually simple act faith has detected and love has forthwith embraced its only adequate object.

So it was practically in the first age; so it has been since. A personal affection for Jesus Christ our Lord was then, is now, the first step, the fundamental thing, in

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 1; viii. 1; i. 20; xiii. 13. [2] 2 St. Pet. i. 5-7. [3] Gal. v. 6.

Christian living. With the conscious life of a Christian soul begins the love of its Object. It sees Jesus Christ our Lord, and it loves Him. For He appeals at once to the affections, where they are not warped by some fatal twist, as the truest, the supreme Object of love. What is it that provokes love? Beauty. In a lower and transient sense, physical beauty; in a higher and permanent sense, moral, spiritual beauty. Our Lord's moral beauty acts upon the affections of a true soul as the sunshine acts upon the petals of a bud. The soul opens involuntarily at His bidding to welcome Him, to bask in His Light, to rejoice in His justice, His tenderness, His veracity, His self-sacrifice. Therefore St. Paul held that to know and not to love Jesus Christ was to be self-condemned; the power of loving Jesus Christ being an unerring test of a man's heart being in the right place. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha."[1]

Secondly, love is called forth by a specific kind of moral beauty, by generosity. The generosity of Jesus our Lord in giving Himself to become Incarnate and to die for us men appeals to the human heart even more powerfully than the faultless beauty of His character. The story of the Passion has melted heathen savages, ere now, to tears; the philosophy of self-sacrifice is always intelligible. "Scarcely for a righteous man," observes St. Paul, "will one die: yet perchance for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[2] "He loved me, and gave Himself for me;"[3] this is the reflection which bids love spring up in the Christian heart; and thus "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. [2] Rom. v. 7, 8. [3] Gal. ii. 20.

live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and rose again."[1]

But, further, love is a distinct endowment. It is not evoked certainly, inevitably, by the operation of the great motives referred to upon our natural sense of fitness, or upon our conscience of right. There is much without, within us, God knows, ready to nip in the bud any fair flower; ready to stifle any pure and lofty impulses of the soul. The provocation from without must be reinforced, corresponded to by some heaven-sent influence within. And thus genuine Christian love is an infused grace: "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Which is given unto us."[2] What else might have been a passing gust of feeling, human perhaps to the verge of sin in its real colouring, is thus transfigured, strengthened, steadied, made permanent by the breath of the Most Holy: it becomes thenceforth a constant and powerful influence, penetrating, swaying, ruling, the inmost life.

Yes! brethren, let us be sure of it—the fundamental thing in the renewed soul is the love of Jesus Christ, God and Man. To love Him our Saviour is to love God, and to love our fellow-men. To love Jesus is to love the awful, illimitable, inaccessible God, so presented as to be within the compass of our finite capacities; condescending to us in a form in which He and His Ineffable Perfections have become, if I may so say, concrete and intelligible. To love Jesus is to love man—man set forth before our eyes in such sort as worthily to claim our ungrudging love; man, relieved from the dreadful entail of his historical, ever-accumulating burden of corruption; man, restored for once to a perfect correspondence, which is at once evident, with the primal sketch, the complete idea, the archetype of his being. And thus the love of Jesus

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. [2] Rom. v. 5.

is the common source of all that is most purely spiritual in religion, and of all that is most fruitful and creative in philanthropy. It is with St. Paul as with St. John; it is now as in the first age; it will be to end of time, as now, the fundamental thing in the religious life.

II.

But St. Paul would have this love abound in knowledge.

The knowledge which St. Paul is thinking of is doubtless primarily religious knowledge. The higher knowledge—ἐπίγνωσις, not merely γνώσις—is what he prays for, as the complement of love. There is a period in the growth of love when such knowledge is imperatively required. In its earlier stages the loving soul lives only in the light and warmth of its Object. It sees Him, as it were, only in a blaze of glory. It rejoices to be before Him, beneath Him, close to Him; it asks no questions, it has no heart for scrutiny; it only loves. It loves and worships; and worships and loves again; it passes its moments, it exhausts its energies in a wellnigh uninterrupted ecstasy. But from the nature of the case this period comes to an end. Not because love grows cold, but because it becomes exacting. Love cannot make certain that it will live in a cell, apart from thought, apart from society, apart from those many influences which may too easily, if neglected, act upon it as a destructive solvent. "No man," it has been said, "can permanently keep his philosophy in one mental compartment, and his devotion in another." And this being so, love has, sooner or later, to come to an understanding with thought, both private and public. In order to live it must essay to know something accurately about its Object. What is He? Whence is He? What can be known of His ways, His works, His will? It is

easy to say that love ought not to ask questions: sooner or later it will ask them. And if these questions are not wisely and truly answered; if, instead of knowledge, nothing but guesses, surmises, myths are forthcoming; then, sooner or later, love in its disappointment sickens and may die. It may recoil with a sense of weary languor from the Object on which its gaze has been so intensely fixed; it may feel that He cannot really satisfy its own enthusiasm about Him, unless He, the Same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, shall stand out before it in clearer outline, unless it can grow more and more in such knowledge, as it may.

How repeatedly, as those must know who know anything of the religious trials of this generation, has this been realised within the last twenty years in the experience of single souls. Why is it that, in so many cases, the sons of deeply religious parents, or men who have been themselves deeply religious men—so far as we can know and speak of such a thing as that—why is it that they have often, in our days, under our eyes, passed from the fervour of love to the blank despair, to the deadly chills of some godless theory of the universe and of life? Well, my brethren, there are in some cases, no doubt, other reasons to be given for this catastrophe. But in some cases, at least, I dare to say, here is the governing reason;—that no care has been taken for them, or they have taken no care for themselves, that love should grow more and more in knowledge. So that a time has come to them, when facts which they might have seen to be embraced and fully accounted for in a comprehensive and yet strictly religious philosophy of being, break in upon their intelligence with a sort of brutal violence, and so suddenly, that they cannot recover their sense of the harmony of all facts in a new and wider survey; and so the vision of love which has hitherto

entranced them seems to be intellectually forfeited. And then, as the whole life of spiritualised affection withers away within them, they conceive themselves martyrs, not to the neglect of knowledge, but to the exigencies of some scientific or metaphysical truth. It is a piteous spectacle; but if anything can add anguish to a Christian's sense of what it really means, it is the reflection that it need not, in many a case, have presented itself at all.

Further, this law we are considering will explain what happened in the history of the Christian Church. In the earliest Apostolical age—at Pentecost and for a while after—love reigned alone, uninquiring, ecstatic. There was daily worship; the daily Eucharist; the fellowship and doctrine of the Apostles. Love had her fill and was at peace. But ere the Apostles had passed away from earth, this earliest rapture of the Church had ceased. When the Gentiles pressed into the fold, questions were, could not but be, asked, about the terms of Church Communion. When the Life and Death and Resurrection of Jesus, inevitably suggesting the tremendous and vital problem of His Personality behind them, came into contact with the Greek Philosophy, a whole world of inquiry irresistibly suggested itself. It was part of the providence of God; it could not, so far as we can see, have been otherwise. And so, in God's providence too, love had to grow and did grow in knowledge. Each of the four groups of St. Paul's Epistles marks a distinct stage achieved under the guidance of Apostolic inspiration, in the doctrinal insight of the earliest Church. Each of the great Alexandrian teachers, Clement—yes! in his measure, Origen—certainly Dionysius, and greater than these, Athanasius and Cyril, poured some new light upon Christian inquiry. The Church passed from the prayers and agonies of the Coliseum and the Catacombs to define, under altered circumstances, her unchanging faith at Nicæa, at Con-

stantinople, at Ephesus, at Chalcedon; not indeed presumptuously to add to what Apostles had taught once for all, but to scan, to catalogue, to study the Apostolical treasure of the Divine Words more accurately than before, and in face of those who would have impaired it. Men who have surveyed Christian Antiquity with jaundiced eyes have said that love had then grown cold, and had given place to dialectics. Men who believe in Christ's presence with His people may see in the great Councils an answer to the Apostle's prayer for love's growth in knowledge; may trace, at any rate thus far, its realisation in Christian history.

Nor, if the great Apostle had been among us now, would he have ceased, we may think, to pray this prayer. How much love, how much moral power, is wasted among us Englishmen only through our ignorance! Look at our religious divisions. Are they not due, at any rate in part, to widespread ignorance of the Will of God respecting the structure of His Church, and the true means of growth in grace? Look at our popular Charities. Are they not administered with a zeal which would achieve fifty per cent. more than it does, if it were dispensed according to economical knowledge? See the jealousy of science among religious people; I mean jealousy of scientific facts; there is abundant reason for being shy of the caprice of hypothesis. We may be assured that science is only waiting, in God's good time, to echo Revelation. Or consider the dislike of beauty, a bad tradition which we have inherited from the Puritanism of the seventeenth century, and which is now lashing the well-meaning fanaticism of the country into a stupid outcry against disinterested efforts to improve the tone and efficiency of public worship. Surely if love had grown a little more rapidly in knowledge, the natural hostility of the world to the efficiency and progress of the Church would not

have been aided, as it is aided now, by the co-operation of many sincerely religious men. Who can doubt that we of this generation need to pray St. Paul's prayer more earnestly than ever?

III.

What has been said with more general reference applies, my brethren, with particular force to the theory, the law of Christian education.

Education, if it is to deserve its name, must begin with the heart. Until a pupil's affections are won, the true groundwork of the process is not mastered. That a certain communication of knowledge may be achieved without the mediation of love; that it may be achieved through the intervention of a strong sense of self-interest, or in a purely mechanical way, by the employment of social pressure, or even by apprehension of bodily discomfort, I do not deny. I am far from saying, too, that in a loftier system all these instruments can be entirely discarded; but, depend upon it, for real lasting work they will not suffice alone.

Probably many of us have been reading a book which has lately appeared, and which illustrates this truth, as it appears to me, with singular force; because it shows how the repression of love, as the first agent in the sacred work of education, will sooner or later assuredly avenge itself. In Mr. John Stuart Mill's Autobiography he gives us an account of the home training which contributed so largely to make him what he became in later years. And in reading that singular record it is difficult to say whether the persistent, merciless, intellectual forcing, which few minds would have been able to bear, or the rigid exclusion of all affection, is its more remarkable feature.

From first to last love is not merely repressed, it is ignored. There are no friends of that cheerless boyhood.

His mother is not once named. His father appears as a restless grim inexorable machine for stimulating thought and for enforcing discipline. Above all, He Who is the One Object of love, He Who made the human heart, and Who alone has the key to its deepest recesses, He is ignored of set purpose; or rather, I should say, "ignored" is not the word that does justice to the reality. At any rate, He is treated as if He were at best an hypothetical Being, Whose existence could not be scientifically verified, and Who therefore lay outside the range of practical considerations. Well, my brethren, we must admit it, this education achieved success. From one point of view it achieved splendid success; at any rate, such success as it ever aimed at. And few educated men of this generation —even among those who differ most widely from Mr. Mill on the most important questions that can possibly engage human attention — would deny that they owe something, at any rate, to his intellectual enterprise, to his clear and direct methods of investigation and of thought, to his passion for fact in that somewhat narrow sense wherein he understood the expression.

But did this theory of education, judged by its own measurements, entirely succeed? was the heart, during these years when its fresh and tender impetuosities should have been recognised and guided, was it indeed repressed with entire impunity? No, assuredly: as the old poet has it—

"Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret."

It will reassert itself, this wronged or baffled human nature, when it is repressed in any name but His Who made it. A few years pass, and the deep fountains of a character which was not unendowed with strong and tender passion are broken up; and in Mr. Mill's later writings we see affection invading regions of inquiry,

from which its rigid exclusion might have been advocated by others than professed philosophers. Not to go further —in his treastise on the Subjection of Women, and in the socialistic elements which colour some portions of his work on Political Economy, Mr. Mill pays, unconsciously, a most real, although an unintended, tribute to the claims of the heart in the work of education. Late in life, if not before, the heart asserts its rights, and in its revengeful insurrection against the stiff pedantry of boyhood and adolescence it imports its own prepossessions into the discussion of questions which, had its true place been recognised earlier, would doubtless have been decided, as they should be decided, by the light of a passionless logic, moving cautiously forwards in the cold but serene atmosphere of pure intellect.

There is, of course, a danger to be recognised from an opposite quarter. Education, which begins and ends with the heart, I have already said is, in all ages—in our day especially—full of grave risks to the heart's best interests. And the object of King's College, as its motto suggests, was assuredly to provide for both; for the heart first, and then for the understanding. *"Sanctè et Sapienter"* —what is that but educated love increasing more and more in knowledge? It was a noble conception—entertained in a day when such conceptions were less common than they have since become—thus to blend in a great institution, in the face of the increasing irreligion of the time, and at the very centre of national activity and thought, the best discipline of the heart with the best discipline of the intellect, by leading intellect and heart alike to the very foot of the Throne of Christ. What wonder if such a project enlisted the support of names representing all that was noblest and best in England? what wonder if your first Principals—especially one never to be mentioned but with the highest honour, Hugh

James Rose—and then a long succession of teachers, whose influence has spread widely and far beyond the walls of this institution, have justified before the world the motto which you dared to take; have shown how possible it was to combine the claims of a tender conscience, illuminated by faith, with the claims of high intellect, pushing its conquests far and wide across the realms of experimental or speculative truth?

But have you always succeeded? My brethren, let us, in this sacred presence, above all things, be sincere. Can I forget—I can never forget—the two years which I spent as a schoolboy (I had no part in the higher education of the place) in the vaults below this chapel, twenty-nine years ago? There was, indeed, training for the intelligence in abundance, and of the best kind, the "*sapienter*" was well provided for. But what of the "*sanctè*"? Well, I must dare to say it, that if, after leaving King's College School, I had not come into contact with other influences, I might have shrunk to the end of my life from the religious truths which now have a first place in my heart! And why was this? Not because religion was ignored; we learnt Bible history, Church history, texts, dates, doctrines in abundance. Not, I am quite sure, because those who were charged with the administration of studies had not the claims of religion at heart; they were notoriously high-minded and deeply religious men. But the truth was, the chill tradition of an earlier generation—a dark cloud which might seem to have drifted down from the coldest skies of the eighteenth century, and to have cast its shadow over the youth of this place,—still rested there. We had not yet escaped into the sunshine which was ours by right, in virtue of our motto. Religion was an affair of the head, in which the heart had little place, if any. There were school prayers; there were religious lessons; there were exam-

inations in religion, as in other things. But there was nothing to touch a boy's soul; there was nothing to reflect God; nothing to make the Christian life in its lofty and pure ideal a popular power among 500 boys; there was nothing to maintain even the semblance of a struggle against the inevitable, the terrible evils of school-boy life. It was the spirit of Epictetus rather than that of Jesus Christ which we here felt, although the language, the forms, the associations were Christian. And a religious philosophy, however pure, cannot do the work of His Love Who died upon the Cross. . . . Since then it is notorious matters have changed, and in the direction which the Apostle, could he have been among us, would have prescribed. You are making common worship interesting and reverent. You are appealing to influences which no education can forget. You are recognising the claims of love as the basis of human training, without forgetting the claims of knowledge.

My brethren, education—let me say it once more and for the last time—must begin with the heart. Even where the deepest motives are not appealed to, the heart is appealed to, with success. We see this elsewhere in schools and universities, which, if they are prudent, make so much of the *esprit de corps.* What is the *esprit de corps* but love for a teacher and a home which represents a great tradition—a tradition to which centuries have contributed; a tradition entwined with the public history of the country, enriched, spiritualised by many a link with progressive thought and sacrifice in the Church; a tradition to which successes have added symmetry and completeness; a tradition which, in its ripe self-confidence, draws strength and new enthusiasm even from occasional failure; what is the *esprit de corps,* I ask, at bottom but love, stimulated by a very complex object which yet on the whole appeals with truth and

power to the heart of every man or boy who comes under its influence?

It may be felt by some of those who, whether as teachers or taught, are associated with the present or the past of this great College, when they take stock of its existing resources and capacities, that whatever the triumphs of its pupils on the field of practical and public life, whatever the ability and accomplishments to which it can undeniably point during a long series of years in its teaching staff, it has been hitherto somewhat wanting in one great element of permanent moral power. Is it not the case that while men have given their labours here most ungrudgingly, they have given their hearts to some other home, and that the College has failed, as an institution representing a moral, religious, historical idea, to enlist the purest and strongest and most lasting sympathies of its pupils? In saying this I may be quite mistaken, as judging only from a narrow range of experience, and from a now distant past. But even if I am right—the times are changing. We are passing, my brethren—it is a truism to say it—through a transitional period. At our older Universities recent legislation has, excepting in the case of a single faculty, severed the tie which for centuries has bound these ancient bodies, and their associated colleges, to the English Church. And although one modern foundation is nobly struggling to repair the loss, and as yet the face of things has not been generally changed, and a stranger walking through our streets and quadrangles might persuade himself of the enduring continuity of our ancient life, they who live upon the spot and have to consider questions of the hour know that it is not so. Of course, the rosebud does not wither as soon as it is plucked; there may even be a moment of languid beauty when it first begins to droop—a moment which appears to justify the act of the spoiler. We have

not yet had time to see the real effects of recent changes; and we are too probably on the eve of changes to come. Few can be so sanguine as to suppose that recent legislation is final, or that what yet remains to the Church in her ancient homes is not logically destined to be taken from her. We seem to be passing across the interval which separates a religious past—whose opportunities were, alas! too sadly neglected—from a future of pure secularism. And when this goal has been reached, institutions like King's College, if they are moderately true to their idea and principles, will enter—cannot but enter—upon a splendid inheritance. Their poverty will be their protection against the religious ruin to which ancient wealth now exposes the great foundations of our ancestors; they will stand erect, let us hope, teaching in its purity and without exaggeration—teaching without compromises or conscience clauses of any sort[1]—teaching in fearless simplicity the faith of the English Church—teaching it still when older teachers are either silent or are boisterously or cynically hostile. That day, depend upon it, will be the day of your opportunity. Who would not wish that that opportunity could have come, if later than it will, yet naturally, and at a less grievous cost? And yet these things are ordered, as all else, by a wise and loving Providence. His movements are too solemn to furnish matters of anything like complaint against human agents; it is no time for making the worst in a hard logical spirit of a cause which must be dear to all good men. All that can be said is that God's providence seems to be moving in the way I have described; we can but bow our heads and recognise, even when we cannot

[1] "One expression in the Sermon might give a false impression. There is a 'conscience clause' in the College system; that is to say, students are not obliged to attend Divinity Lectures if they plead a conscientious dissent. It seems to have been of long standing. But the author was not aware of it when he referred to the subject in his Sermon."—*Extract from the Preface to this Sermon.*

understand His action. But the great question for this and other places remains, whether they will be equal to the destiny which so probably awaits them; whether they will learn that education means much more than so much knowledge or so much mental exercise, even religious subjects being included; whether they will content themselves with perfecting a mechanical provision for the understanding—or will aim, with a nobler ambition, at taking captive the hearts of all who seek education at their hands. It is because the occasion of to-day seems to link itself naturally with such hopes as these, that we may so thankfully associate ourselves with it. In this beautiful building, in these bright services, in these many surrounding tokens of zeal and life, we may trace the energy of a new spirit, which is in its real essence and efficacy more precious far than anything that can charm the eye or fall upon the ear. It is the spirit of love taking its true place in the work of education. You cannot anticipate the centuries; you cannot, within the lifetime of a generation, crown a recent foundation with those attractions and graces that only come with time. Time, indeed, soon passes, and for those who succeed us he will have achieved his work; but we meanwhile can at least partially anticipate him, by taking care that love shall here ripen into knowledge, instead of expecting that mere knowledge will kindle love. Ah! what it might do—let me rather say, what it will do—in this place, a love which, entwining itself around all the incidents and associations of a great Institution, of a body of devoted students, teachers, and learners, should centre persistently in our Adorable Redeemer, and then should flood the created understandings around Him with light—light of all kinds and degrees of brightness, but especially that best of all kinds of light which is never divorced from love, and which will lead us on to the dawn of the Eternal Day!

SERMON XIV.

TEACHING AND HEALING.[1]

St. Matt. ix. 35.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

THERE can be no need for insisting on the importance of an occasion such as the present. No profession touches the outward conditions of human life more constantly and intimately than the profession of medicine; and when its foremost European representatives are assembled, under distinguished auspices, in this metropolis, to examine what their science has hitherto done towards relieving human suffering, and to decide what, with its present attainments and resources, it may yet hope to do, we all are interested as a matter of course. Heirs as we are, all of us, to the legacy of disease and pain, which comes down from the first fathers of our race, we welcome this serious and beneficent effort to review and marshal the accumulated stores of knowledge by which a kindly Providence enables man, not indeed to escape his inevitable doom, but to alleviate, to reduce in area, to keep at bay, the physical sufferings which in the great majority of cases herald its approach. This great international meeting, where knowledge so precious to the wellbeing of our race is brought together, inspected, sifted, analysed, compared, and then consolidated and enhanced, is the common concern of the civilised world; and

[1] Preached (before the International Medical Congress) in St. Paul's Cathedral, on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity, August 7, 1881.

it is the special concern of this country, which has not been slow to express, through those who have a right to speak in its name, its sense of the respect which is due to its distinguished visitors, and to the errand on which they come.

Yet, at the outset of what I may have to say, it is right once more to note with thankful satisfaction the international character of this great gathering. Nations are the creations of Providence acting in history; they have their frontiers determined, sometimes by the limits of race and language, sometimes by the barriers of seas and mountains; they have, as nations, distinguishing characteristics for good and evil; and the feeling which binds a man to his country finds its Divinely-appointed warrant in nature, not less truly than does that stronger feeling which binds him to his family. But as the family is greater than the man, and the nation than the family, so the human race represents a greatness which altogether transcends that of the nation. Here, in this temple of Jesus Christ, owning too as it does the name of the glorious Apostle whose life-work it was to break down those walls whereby Jewish nationalism would fain have kept for ever the rest of the world at a distance from God —here, if anywhere, we may remember that there are truths and duties before which national barriers of feeling rightly disappear. Like those councils of the Church, which in ancient or later days have brought together representatives from countries and races parted by the prejudices and hostilities of ages: like the great heart of the Apostle, which in the unity of the early Christian body could discern no difference between Greek and Jew, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and freeman;—a meeting such as the present rallies the thoughtful and benevolent forces of humanity on a splendid scale; it silences the jealousies, the misunderstandings, the quarrels which too

often part and keep asunder even the elect of intelligence and goodness; and, in the double name of science and philanthropy, it presents an array of powerful and well-stored minds, such as, perhaps, never before met together in London, at least for the purpose of doing the best that our modern world can do for the physical well-being of the human race.

I.

Science and philanthropy, did I say? Yes; and it is a combination which at once carries us, over an interval of eighteen centuries, to the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, teaching in the assemblies, and healing the diseases of His contemporaries. In Him surely were allied the highest and largest knowledge, and the most disinterested efforts for man's physical and moral welfare, that our earth has ever seen. "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every manner of disease among the people."

Consider the predominant character of His recorded miracles. If we adopt the common, but not altogether satisfactory division of them into works of power and works of mercy, there are of the former thirteen, and of the latter twenty-six. Of these last, three are cases of restoration to life; six are cures of demoniacs, in whom physical disorder was often strangely combined with moral obliquity; while seventeen of the patients that He cured might any day have presented themselves for treatment in a London hospital. Not only the blind, the deaf, the dumb, but leprosy, fever, paralysis, incurable weakness, dropsy, an issue of blood of twelve years' standing, a maimed limb, a laceration, passed under that tender and healing touch. And indeed some of His works of power, as they are called, over nature, had a like object with

those miracles of healing mercy; as when, to allay human hunger, He fed the five and the four thousand, and procured a draught of fish where the toil of the fishermen had failed. These single acts were, each of them, merely samples of a habit. We all remember the hyperbolical reference to the number of our Lord's unrecorded works at the close of the fourth Gospel;[1] and such passages as that before us show that the earlier writers of our Lord's Life have only selected a few typical specimens of actions which were very numerous indeed.

Times indeed there were in His ministry, when it might even seem as though the human body had a greater claim on His attention than the human soul. Such was that occasion which St. Mark describes in the first chapter of his Gospel, when St Peter's mother-in-law had been just cured of a fever at Capernaum, and "at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the doors. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases."[2] If we may reverently compare this scene with modern analogies, it bears less resemblance to anything in the life of a clergyman than to the occupation of a physician to a hospital on the day of his seeing his out-patients. There is indeed all the difference in the world between the best professional advice and summary cure such as our Lord's; but we are for the moment only looking at the outward aspects of the scene, and it shows very vividly how largely our Lord's attention was given to the well-being of the bodily frame of man.

Now it would be a mistake to imagine that this feature of our Lord's ministry was accidental or inevitable. Nothing in His work was accident. All was deliberate, and had an object. Nothing in His work was inevitable,

[1] St. John xxi. 25. [2] St. Mark i. 32-34.

except so far as it was freely dictated by His wisdom and His mercy. To suppose that this union in Him of prophet and physician was determined by the necessities of a rude civilisation, such as that of certain tribes in Africa and elsewhere, or of certain periods and places in mediæval Europe, when knowledge was scanty, and it was easy and needful for a single person, at each social centre, to master all that was known on two or three great subjects, is to make a supposition which does not apply to Palestine at the time of our Lord's appearance. The later prophets, all of them, were prophets, and nothing more; neither legislators, nor statesmen, nor physicians. In John the Baptist we see no trace of the restorative powers exerted on rare occasions by Elijah and Elisha; and when our Lord appeared, dispensing on every side cures for bodily disease, the sight was as novel to His contemporaries as it was welcome. Nor are His healing works to be accounted for by saying that they were only designed to draw attention to His message, by certifying His authority to deliver it, or by saying that they were only symbols in its many and varying aspects of a higher work which He had more at heart—the work of healing the diseases of the human soul. True it is that Christ's healing activity had this double value. It *was* evidence of His authority as a Divine Teacher; it *was* a picture in detail, addressed to sense, of that which, as Redeemer of our race, He meant to do in regions beyond the sphere of sense; but these aspects of His care for the human body were not primary, they were incidental. We may affirm reverently, but with certainty, that His first object was to show Himself as the Deliverer and Restorer of human nature as a whole; not of the reason and conscience merely, without the imagination and the affections; not of the spiritual side of man's nature without the bodily. Therefore He was not only Teacher but Physician, and therefore and thus He

has shed upon the medical profession, to the end of time, a radiance and a consecration which is ultimately due to the conditions of that Redemptive work, to achieve which He Himself came down from heaven.

II.

"Teaching and healing." This, the motto of our Lord's life, is the motto also of the profession of medicine. It also not merely heals but teaches; it also is, in its way, a prophet, with truths and virtues specially intrusted to it, that it may recommend and propagate them.

1. It is little to say of this great profession in our day that it is a keeper and teacher of intellectual truth. We all know that it has furnished of late years to literature some of the most enterprising efforts in the way of speculative thought; and the remarkable Address with which this Congress was opened will have informed the public generally, while it vividly reminded the audience which listened to it, of the vast additions that within the last score of years medical science has made to human knowledge, and of the immense perspectives that are opening before it. On these high themes it would be impossible to dwell here; but it may be allowable and sufficient to say, that as a permanent teacher of truth, medical science has powers and responsibilities which are all its own.

The physician can point out, with an authority given to few other men, the present operative force of some of the laws of God. The laws of nature, as we call them—its observed uniformities—are not less the laws and will of God than the Ten Commandments. Nay, that moral law finds its echo and countersign in this physical world. It is justified by the natural catastrophes which

follow on its neglect. It is not the clergyman but the physician who can demonstrate the sure connexion between unrestrained indulgence and the decay of health and life; who can put his finger upon the real causes which too often fill, not only our hospitals, but our lunatic asylums, with strong young men; or who can illustrate, by instances drawn from experience, the tender foresight of moral provisions, which at first sight may appear tyrannical or capricious. To be able to show this in detail, to give men thus the physical reason for moral truth;—this is a great prophetic power, a vast capacity, which we in this pulpit might well envy in its possessors; it is a grave responsibility for which those who wield it, like other prophets, must one day give account.

The physician can trace, with an authority which is felt to be so real in no other man of science, the true limits of human knowledge. He knows that to-day science is as ignorant as she was 2000 years ago of what life in its essence is. Of the physical conditions under which life exists, science has very much that is wonderful to say; and, indeed, she has just been telling us that life, viewed on its physical side, is "the sum of the joint action of all parts of the human system, of the higher or vital ones as well as of the lower or inferior; that there is no one seat of life, since every elementary part, every cell, is a seat of life." We listen with sincere respect and interest; but we observe that this only states, in language of beautiful precision, what are the points of contact between life and the animal organism: we still ask what life is in itself, and we hear no answer. No. Just as science pauses before each atom of matter, unable to satisfy herself whether it be infinitely divisible or not, so, when she has exhausted the skill of the anatomist in endeavouring to surprise the life-principle

in some secret recesses of the animal frame, she again must pause to confess that the constitutive essence of the life-principle itself is a mystery beyond her ken. And never is science more worthy of her prophetic office than when she dares to make this confession. True science, like prophecy, from Moses downwards, knows not merely what she knows, but the limits of her knowledge; and when she is tempted, if ever, to forget this, as by him who whispered into the ear of the dying Laplace, some praise of her reputation which had seemed to ignore it, she replies, with the great Frenchman, "My friend, pray don't speak thus. That which we know is little enough; that of which we are ignorant is enormous."

The physician is a prophet; and this character is never so apparent as when life is drawing towards its close. Often when to the sanguine ignorance of friends, the bright eye and the buoyant step seem to forbid serious apprehension, medical science already hears not uncertainly the approaching footsteps of death. There is a point at which all forms of highly-cultivated knowledge become instincts; they are certain of their judgments, even when not able to produce a reason. And no man can have passed middle life without being struck with the sort of second-sight, as it may well seem, which is at the command of an accomplished physician. Would that I might be permitted, in the freedom of my ministry, to say a word as to the use of this tremendous power! Too often, when science knows that death is inevitable, the dying man is allowed to cherish hopes of life, with a view to possibly prolonging for a few more days or hours the struggle for physical existence; and thus the precious, the irrevocable moments pass, during which the soul, by acts of faith, and hope, and love, and contrition, might unite itself to the Divine Redeemer, and prepare itself for the presence-chamber of the Judge.

Brethren, it is not for this that your higher knowledge is given you; it is not for this that the departed will thank you when you too meet them in the world of spirits.

2. But the medical profession may also be a great teacher of reverence. Whatever else may be said of our age, reverence is not one of its leading characteristics. We have, as we think, explored, examined, appraised all the sublimities, all the sanctities, all the mysteries that commanded the awe of our less cultivated or less inquisitive forefathers; and, as a generation, we have ceased to revere. And surely this absence of reverence is a moral loss. What is reverence? It is the sincere, instinctive acknowledgment of a higher greatness, which attracts and awes the mind that gazes on it. We grow up insensibly towards that which we revere; and to revere nothing is to fall back upon self as the best standard of attainable excellence, and to be dwarfed and blighted proportionately. Now, the profession of medicine is, or should be, an apostolate of reverence; for its field of action is the human body; and in no other school may reverence be learned more surely than here.

We Christians have indeed, to speak frankly, our own reasons for thinking this. As we contemplate the human body, we cannot forget what our faith teaches us about its origin, its present purpose, and its coming destiny.

We know that the body, like the soul, is from God. It is perhaps His noblest handiwork on earth. No lines of beauty, it has been said by a great writer, rival those of the human form. No mechanism in any other animal is so perfect. For our part, as we contemplate the human body, we cannot forget its Author. Even if evolution should win for itself a permanent place in

our conceptions of the past history of man, it would still leave untouched the great question of man's origin. When every step of the process, continued through ages, shall have been elaborated by science, the question will still remain, Who furnished the original material, the primal monad? Who gave the impact which set the process in motion? Who prescribed the evolutionary law? Who governed its application? Above all, who intervened, at a critical moment, to endow the subject of this evolution with a spiritual and reflective faculty, making him thus to differ, not in degree, but in kind, from the creatures around him? That which gives every work of God its first title to interest, namely, the fact that it is His work, confers this title with especial emphasis on the human body.

Then, next, what is the present function of the body? Christians see in it at once a tabernacle and an instrument. It is the tabernacle of the soul. That the soul is distinct from it; that that in us which consciously perceives, thinks, wills, acts; which knows itself to be one and identical, from week to week, and from year to year, while the body is perpetually changing both its substance and its outward mien—this is for us a fact of experience. In order to be certain of it we do not need a Revelation. We know that we cannot understand the functions of the body unless we know something of the functionising organs; that, for example, we know nothing of the circulation of the blood unless we know what the heart is, and the arteries and the veins. But we can understand the intellectual and moral faculties; we can arrange, and analyse, and appreciate them, while we are altogether in ignorance of the nature and functions of the brain. In short, we are conscious that the "I," which is the seat and centre of these faculties, is radically distinct from the bodily organism which is

most immediately related to it, but which unquestionably *is* related to it, partly as a tabernacle, and partly as an instrument. The soul inhabits and employs the body; the body is the veil and the interpretation of the soul. Who does not know how the soul of man speaks through the voice, with its intonations varying from moment to moment according to the dictates from within? Who has not felt how the soul of man speaks through the eye? how, when the eye is dull and languid, when it is bright and animated, when it flashes fire and passion, these are moods of the immortal spirit within? And who does not perceive the eloquence of gesture—especially of involuntary gesture? it also is the language of something more than matter and force. We note its successive phases of energy and repose, of suggestiveness and insistance, of conciliation and defiance; and we read, in characters not to be mistaken, the language of the being that dwells within the frame whose movements it thus controls. More than this, we Christians believe that this tenant of our material frames may and does itself become the sharer of a life higher than its own; that our bodies are temples of the Eternal Spirit, because He, in a way which we cannot understand, makes our spirits His temples; and thus the body is, in our eyes, itself precious and sacred, an object of true reverence, if only by reason of Him Whom it thus veils and serves.

Again, there is the destiny of the body. As we Christians gaze on it, we know that there awaits it the humiliation of death and decay; we know that it will be resolved into its chemical constituents; but we look beyond; we know also that it has a future. Beyond the hour of death is the hour of the resurrection; beyond the humiliation of the coffin and the grave there is the life which will not die. The reconstruction of the decayed body presents to us no greater difficulty than its original

creation. If we ask the question how it will be; we are told, upon what is for us sufficient authority, that "our Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."[1] Thus in this life the body is like a child who has great prospects before him, and we respect it accordingly.

But you, gentlemen, can add to these motives for reverence another which appeals not to faith, but to experience. It has been finely said, that among the students of nature irreverence is possible only to the superficial. You are too conscious of the great powers in whose presence you move and work, of the mysteries above, around, within you, of the magnificent and exhaustless subject, whose fringes you seem only to have touched when you know most about it, to escape from the awe, which all true knowledge, with its ever-present consciousness of a larger ignorance, must always inspire. In this matter science, whatever be her immediate interest, is ever the same. You can understand Newton comparing his finest achievements to the child playing with the waves as they break upon the sand; and as you move along the awful frontier where the world of matter shades off into the world of spirit, not the least service that you can do to the men of this generation is by teaching them the mysteriousness of what they see and are, to prepare them to do justice to what Revelation has to say about what they do not see, and what they will be.

3. Lastly, the profession of medicine is, from the nature, I had almost said the necessity of the case, a teacher of benevolence.

Often may we have witnessed the transformation—

[1] Phil. iii. 21.

one of the most striking and beautiful to be seen in life —by which the medical student becomes the medical practitioner. We may have known a medical student who is reckless, selfish, or worse; and we presently behold him, as a medical practitioner, leading a more unselfish and devoted life than any other member of society. What, we ask, is this something akin to ministerial ordination that has wrought the surprising change, and brought with it such an inspiration of tenderness and sympathy? The answer apparently is, that now, as a practitioner, he approaches human suffering from a new point of view. As a student, he looked on it as something to be observed, discussed, analysed, lectured upon, examined in. As a practitioner, he is absorbed with the idea that it is something to be relieved. This new point of view, so profoundly Christian, will often take possession of a man's whole moral nature, and give it a totally new direction; and thus, as a rule, the medical practitioner is at once a master and a teacher of benevolence. Not only or chiefly the great heads and lights of the profession, whose names are household words in all the universities of Europe, and who have their reward in a homage which neither wealth nor birth can possibly command; but also —at least in this country and pre-eminently—the obscurer country doctor, whose sphere of fame is his parish or his neighbourhood. Upon him the sun of publicity rarely or never sheds its rays; his life is passed chiefly in the homes of the very poor, and amidst acts of the kindliest and most self-sacrificing service; for him the loss of rest and the loss of health is too often nothing less than a law of his work; and as he pursues his beneficent but humble career from day to day, his left hand rarely knows what his right hand doeth. Yet surely such men as these, in the words of Ecclesiasticus,

"maintain the state of the world, while all their desire is in the work of their craft."[1] They pour oil and wine, as can or do few or none others, into the gaping wounds of our social system; they bind and heal not merely the limbs of their patients, but the more formidable fractures which separate class from class; and, unless He Whom now we worship on His throne in heaven is very unlike all that He was eighteen hundred years since on earth, such lives as these must be, in not a few cases, very welcome to Him, if only for the reason that they are so like one conspicuous aspect of His own.

May I add one word? If it is knowledge which makes the profession of medicine so capable of a lofty and practical benevolence, must we not trust that this knowledge may not be purchased at the cost of the very virtue which it promotes? It would ill become me to attempt to suggest in detail what pathological experiments are necessary and legitimate; but may it not be said that such experiments are only justified, if at all, by some recognised philanthropic aim, as distinct from the general instinct of scientific curiosity?

Occasions like the present always recall the memories of the dead; and it is impossible not to think of two Englishmen among others, who were still living a few months since, and who, had they still been here, would have welcomed and been welcomed by this Congress with no stinted enthusiasm. If, as having had the happiness of knowing them, I recall their names, it is because in their several ways they illustrate remarkably those aspects of the medical profession to which your attention has been just directed.

Of these one represented the speculative and scientific rather than the practical side of the profession. He filled with great distinction a Chair at Oxford, and devoted him-

[1] Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 34.

self with unwearied industry to all that could illustrate the past history of man. He was almost as much at home in the early formations of language as among the skulls and bones which might be unearthed in a Yorkshire barrow; and nothing was trivial for a mind which believed firmly in the unity of truth, and in the value of all contributions, of whatever kind, towards attaining it. But that which should be especially recalled here and to-day is his reverent bearing as he traversed the obscure region which divides the physical from the supersensuous world; his resolute faith in immaterial existences; his profound sense of overawing mystery everywhere penetrating the great subject which was intrusted to his skill; the childlike consciousness that he was beginning to learn, when to others he seemed to be already a master of sentences. Long will his University and his country mourn the late Professor Rolleston.[1]

1 Dr. Acland permits me to subjoin the following illustration of the remark in the text :—

The day before Dr. Rolleston's death, which was one of suffering and distress, he had been speaking in his bright way of politics, and of the Whigs in the time of Lord Sidmouth.

A friend (Dr. Acland), who with his sister was sitting with him, remarked that he had often wondered which were the more congenial to Dr. Rolleston's mind—political or scientific problems?

"Politics——"

"Politics *certainly*," he said.

For some minutes he lay still, and then suddenly, slowly, in the most deliberate and clear manner, he said—

"Nature is the art of God. You know that. [Referring to old discussions on this expression of Sir Thomas Browne, in *Religio Medici*.]

"Politics is the art of man. I am fit for the one; I cannot grapple with the other.

"Any man of uprightness and sense can, with prayer, go right in politics. Without prayer he will be liable to perversions which he might have escaped. *I* cannot fathom the ways of the Infinite. Nature is all too vast.

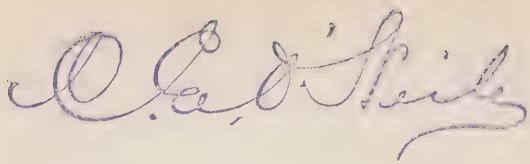
"Lo, these are parts of His ways; how little a portion is heard of Him!"

His friend, impressed by his solemn force, and his clear utterance, said, "These last words were formerly inscribed in the Christ Church Museum. I went lately to see if they were there still. They were gone."

"Most certainly," he said, "I did not remove them."

And the other of whom I am thinking, and who was the first to leave us, illustrates by his career no less remarkably the connection between the medical profession and active philanthropy. Whether it was within the walls of Kars, or on the later battle-fields of the Danube, wherever there was suffering, wherever there was oppression and wrong, the quick eye and tender heart of Dr. Humphry Sandwith were ready for even heroic service. For him medicine was ever the right hand of philanthropy, and his philanthropy was quickened by a keen sense of social and human justice. Many years, too, will pass before a life so unselfish in its aims as his can pass from memory.

Whatever else may be said of a cosmopolitan meeting like the present, this assuredly may be said of it, that its members will not meet again in this life. In a few hours, gentlemen, you will be on your way to all quarters of the civilised world, bearing with you, let us trust, solid additions to the knowledge which you have brought us, and cherishing kindly memories of this great city, and of the English people. But you will never, all of you, meet again. This solemn thought must surely deepen the sense of responsibility with which you address yourselves anew to your work as teachers of truth, or as pioneers of philanthropy. The two objects are, in the last analysis—one. Never forget that there is a truth beyond and higher than the truths of physics; that there is a better and brighter world than the world of sense. Of that world our Divine Redeemer did not lose sight when He healed the woes of this; and medical science will assert, in the long-run, its true claims to human admiration and gratitude, when it keeps its eye upon those summits of truth to which indeed it may most persuasively point us on, but which we reach under the guidance of Faith.



SERMON XV.

DEVOTION TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.[1]

ISAIAH lxii. 5.

For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee.

OF the two Apostles who have had some place in our thoughts and prayers to-day,[2] Holy Scripture tells us little. St. Jude, indeed, the Apostle with three names,[3] has the distinction which belongs to the brother of James-the-Less, and still more to the author of that Epistle which Origen has described as "consisting of few verses, yet filled with vigorous words of heavenly grace."[4] But he makes only one separate appearance in the Gospel narrative; and his question[5] in the supper-room, why our Lord would manifest Himself unto the disciples and not unto the world, shows that on the eve of the Passion he had much to learn of the purpose and character of the new kingdom of heaven. After Pentecost, he disappears behind a veil of more or less precarious tradition, out of which history may possibly gather with substantial truth that he laid the foundation of that great Syrian Church[6] to

[1] Preached (before the University) in the Church of St. Mary, Cambridge, on the Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity, October 28, 1888.

[2] Festival of St. Simon and St. Jude.

[3] St. Hier. ad Matt. x. 4, Credendum est eum fuisse trinomium.

[4] Comm. in Matt. xiii. 55. *ἐπιστολὴν, ὀλιγόστιχον μὲν, πεπληρωμένην δὲ τῶν τῆς οὐρανίου χάριτος ἐῤῥωμένων λόγων.*

[5] St. John xiv. 22.

[6] Assem. Bibl. Or. i. 318. St. Jer. ubi supr. That St. Jude's Epistle is not in the Peschito is no objection to this; the Canon was far from being settled at the date of that version.

which we owe the first translation of the New Testament into a vernacular tongue; not to speak of poets and theologians who will ever be held in honour by Christian learning and Christian piety.

But what do we know of the Apostle whose name stands before St. Jude's in the public language of the Church, as it does in two out of the four lists of the Apostolic College which are preserved in the New Testament? Of him we must say that we know nothing whatever of a personal character, except that, as his name implies, he belonged before his conversion to that implacable sect whose fierce zeal in the next generation shed such a lurid light upon the closing scenes of agony and despair amidst which the Jerusalem of the Gospel age sank into its grave. We only know that he was the Canaanite, or the Zealot; and, considering the marked retention of that name after his conversion, it is more than likely that even when his character had been transformed by the grace of Christ, enough of the old fire remained to remind his associates of what he had been in bygone years. Beyond this there is nothing but the traditions which make Northern Africa or Persia the scene of his ministry, and crucifixion the manner of his death. Thus if we assume that Nathanael is St. Bartholomew, there is no member of the sacred College about whom Holy Scripture is so silent as about Simon the Canaanite. Of the traitor-Apostle we know a great deal more than of this converted Zealot, who yet lived and laboured and died in the service of our Divine Redeemer.

That which makes the silence of Holy Scripture about such a man so remarkable, I had almost said so pathetic, is the greatness of his office and work. This almost unknown Apostle was, let us remember, an Apostle. He was one of that band of brethren whom our Incarnate Lord admitted to a companionship, compared with which,

at least in a Christian's judgment, any earthly distinction whatever must seem poor and vain. Not less truly than the three who seemed to their contemporaries to be "pillars"[1] of the new temple, he too had heard and obeyed a Divine call; not less truly than they had he received from the Breath and the Words of Christ the invigorating grace of a commission from Heaven; he too, in the upper Chamber and on the mount of the Ascension, had beheld with the eye of sense the Risen and Living Form of his crucified Master; and to him among the rest were addressed these momentous words: "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[2] And thus, though little was said or remembered of him on earth, yet surely among the twelve foundations of the wall of the heavenly city, whereon are written the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb,[3] Simon is not forgotten. In truth, an Apostle could not be less than an Apostle; there are offices to which no personal achievements can add distinction; there are prerogatives from the splendour of which no personal obscurity can detract.

Isaiah's words in the text may help to illustrate the spirit and meaning of such a life as St. Simon's. Isaiah is looking across the centuries, not only at the still future Exile, but at much beyond it. The Exile indeed, with its sore burden of misery and humiliation, its agony and suspense, its abrupt and triumphant close, is so altogether present to him,[4] that he lives in it as in a world which is

[1] Gal. ii. 9. [2] St. Luke xxii. 28-30. [3] Rev. xxi. 14.

[4] The Son of Sirach says, with especial reference to the Second Part of Isaiah, that *πνεύματι μεγάλῳ εἶδε τὰ ἔσχατα καὶ παρεκάλεσε τοὺς πενθοῦντας ἐν Σιών· ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος ὑπέδειξε τὰ ἐσόμενα καὶ τὰ ἀπόκρυφα πρὶν ἢ παραγενέσθαι αὐτά.*—Ecclus. xlviii. 24, 25.

actually his own; he lives in it so entirely for the time being that those moderns who, on *à priori* grounds, find a difficulty in understanding how a human soul could be endowed with this supernatural gift of vividly realising a strictly distant future have pictured to themselves a later unknown prophet whom they imagine to have witnessed the scenes which the real prophet foresaw. It is on the recovery from this scene of suffering and shame that Isaiah's eye is now fixed, and one token of the glory and completeness of this recovery is the enthusiasm with which the restored city will inspire her sons. She will appear in their eyes not only venerable as a mother, but beautiful as a bride; she will command at their hands not merely the reverence and gratitude and service of dutiful children, but that more tender and soul-absorbing passion which a young man gives to the mistress of his heart. "As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee."

The prophet's language is undoubtedly bold, and its audacity consists in this: that it seems to make too large a demand on human feeling. At first sight we may think it improbable, if not impossible, that the human heart and will can ever pay to a cause, a society, a country, a Church, an abstract and impalpable object of any kind—that debt of tender, disinterested passion which may be paid to another human being. "As a young man marrieth a virgin;" what can be more concrete and intelligible? "So shall thy sons," O restored Jerusalem, "marry thee;" here reality seems to fade away under the shadow of metaphor: it is difficult to see how any real parallel can exist between an intellectual interest or reasoned sense of duty to a public cause or institution, although prescribing exertion and even sacrifice, and the spontaneous, glowing, fervid devotion of a young man to his chosen bride.

Say you so, my brethren? Then let me say that as yet you know little of some salient features of human nature. As a matter of fact, abstractions, as we call them, do provoke passion, the passion of love and the passion of hate, no less truly than do concrete and visible objects. Millions of human beings have worked, suffered, fought, and died for these very abstractions;—for a political or social doctrine, for the fame of a fallen dynasty, for the credit of some secret club or association, for a country that has been crushed out of existence, for some wild undemonstrable theory, for some baseless or grotesque superstition, no less than for a true and soul-inspiring faith or principle. Like the road from Samaria to the fords of Jordan, after the Syrian retreat[1] the highways of history are strewn with the abandoned relics of failure and disaster—relics which show how mighty is the power of causes which we may deem abstract and intangible to move men to the greatest efforts, and to stir the most passionate emotions of the human soul.

Isaiah's comparison may suggest that the devotion of her sons to the City of God would have three characteristics.

I.

It would be, first of all, an unreserved, whole-hearted devotion; a devotion which bestows on its object its best and its all. "With my body I thee worship; and with all my worldly goods I thee endow," is the language not only of a Christian Church formulary, but of the human heart in its better mood, throughout all time; and it marks the first characteristic of that devotion to the Church of God which Isaiah saw in vision across the centuries.

Undoubtedly a partial fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy

[1] 2 Kings vii. 15.

may be recognised in the love and service which Israel after the flesh received from a long line of patriot children. Noblest among them were the Maccabees; but they were only samples of a spirit which was shared, in their day and afterwards, by thousands of their countrymen. That temper was indeed too often mingled with moral alloy that sullied its purity. But the men who saved their country from the cultured Paganism of Antiochus Epiphanes, and who even after the utter ruin of their sacred home by Titus, rose once and again to pour out their blood like water in an unavailing struggle with Imperial Rome at the epoch of its greatest military power, were assuredly not men only under the sway of a common or sordid motive. In their love to "Jerusalem the Holy," whose name was stamped upon their coins, they surely exhibit the careless self-abandonment of the passion which gives itself without stint to the object of its choice.

Compare these Jewish heroes with patriots of the heathen world. They are without the indefinable grace of the Athenian who felt, as the great historian[1] makes Pericles feel, the joy and glory of membership in a country at once free and cultured and self-reliant; they know nothing of the bold conceptions of a world-wide rule of law and peace, enforced by a sword that should spare the submissive while it smote the proud—conceptions which filled the imaginations and shaped the energies of Roman statesmen. Their horizon was in an earthly sense far narrower; their enthusiasm was roused and sustained by different aims. For they were sons not only of a city, but in some sense of a Church; they were devoted to a creed no less than to a public policy. In Israel these things, elsewhere separate, were intertwined; the Lord had chosen Zion to be an habita-

[1] Thucyd. ii. 37, 40.

tion for Himself; and this choice made her, to those who had faith in it, the object of a passionate attachment, in some respects without a parallel in history.

Now, our Lord proclaimed and founded, within the Jewish nation, yet with a capacity and, indeed, an internal necessity of passing beyond its bounds, a new Society, which was to be more to the intellect and heart of man than the Greek πόλις, or the Roman World-Empire, or the Jewish Theocracy itself, ever had been or could be; yet which should sanction and satisfy, in ample measure, those instincts of union, brotherhood, improvement, order, of which earlier forms of association among men were the outcome and assertion. This Society, in virtue of its origin, its object, and its compass, He named the Kingdom of Heaven. As described by Himself and His Apostles, it was to have no political or social limits; it was to embrace all races and conditions of men and women; it was to transcend the barriers of sense and time, and associate those who still live here below with their fellow-citizens in the invisible world. So that ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει—our common life as members of the new kingdom has its sphere in the heavens.[1] And that this Society, thus visible and invisible, was not an accidental but an essential feature of our Lord's Religion is plain from His claiming a Messiahship as His own, which already implied a kingdom; from His instituting Sacraments which confer and maintain, among other things, membership in a community; and from the prominence which He assigns to that great grace which beyond any other draws and keeps men together, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, that ye have love one towards another." [2]

[1] Phil. iii. 20.

[2] St. John xiii. 35. Cf. Gore, *The Ministry of the Christian Church* pp. 40, 41.

It is a note of genius in Thomas Carlyle, that, standing as he did almost, if not entirely, outside the beliefs and sympathies which point to ancient Christianity, he has recognised in memorable words how great is the idea of the Church of Christ. He is describing the ideals under which, as he maintains, man "marches and fights with victorious assurance." "The Church!" he exclaims: "What a word was there; richer than Golconda and the treasures of the world! In the heart of the remotest mountains rises the little kirk; the dead all slumbering round it, under their white memorial-stones, 'in hope of a happy resurrection.' Dull wert thou, O reader, if never in any hour (say of moaning midnight, when such kirk hung spectral in the sky, and Being was as if swallowed up of darkness) it spoke to thee things unspeakable, that went to thy soul's soul. Strong was he that had a Church, what we can call a Church: he stood thereby, though 'in the centre of immensities, in the conflux of eternities,' yet manlike towards God and man; the vague shoreless universe had become a firm city for him, a dwelling which he knew. Such virtue was in belief; in these words, well spoken, I believe. Well might men prize their *Credo*, and raise stateliest temples for it, and reverend hierarchies, and give it the tithe of their substance: it was worth living for and dying for."[1]

Certain it is that the Church of Christ has inspired millions of Christians with the mingled love and enthusiasm here described. Not only her sworn servants and officers, the ministers of the Word and of the Altar, but laymen in every rank of life: soldiers and statesmen, monarchs and slaves, students and men of action, the wealthy and the poor, the young and the old, the practical and the imaginative, the cheerful and the sad, the stern and the buoyant. Nothing is more wonderful than the

[1] *French Revolution*, i. p. 12, ed. 1862.

almost infinite variety of character and condition that is to be noticed in the vast army of the sons or suitors of the Church, as they pass before us during the ages of Christian history. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. . . . All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and shall show forth the praises of the Lord. . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."[1]

Nor may we wonder that it has been so. If it be, as it is, the instinct of a noble nature to give time, money, thought, strength, health, even life itself, for the service of our country; to deem it a rare and precious privilege if by any exertion or sacrifice we can do aught to extend her influence, to augment her resources, to raise her name higher among the nations of the earth, to add ever so little to the mighty fabric which those who have gone before us have bequeathed to us Englishmen of to-day; surely a kindred and even stronger feeling towards the Church of Christ is intelligible and legitimate. Not merely towards what we behold as an organised system; stately buildings, solemn worship, a Divinely-ordered ministry, titles, incomes, corporations of which human law takes cognisance;—these things are the fringe of a higher reality; they mark the point at which a heavenly system just touches the soil of earth. A vast combination of immortal beings associated in virtue of that in them which is highest and most lasting; a confederation of spirits bound to each other by a common faith and hope, and by communion with a common though invisible Ruler and Redeemer must, from the nature of the case, speak more

[1] Isa. lx. 4, 6, 14.

powerfully to the heart of man than any society, of which force, or material interest, or even the tie of race is the animating or ruling principle; it must come nearer to provoking a kind of devotion which shall resemble that of the bridegroom to the bride.

There was a phrase that had wide currency some years ago, and which has not been without its influence on the formation of convictions: a phrase which warned us against the danger of putting the Church in the place of the Redeemer. A warning, most assuredly, which has a true claim to consideration and respect; since it may not be denied that at certain epochs of history, and in certain cases, there has been so keen and one-sided a devotion to some external aspect or mode of action in the Church as to lose sight, in whatever degree, of the presence and glory of the Saviour. Beyond all question it is only as His Church that she has any claim on Christian hearts at all. But surely her claim as His Church is beyond dispute. We do not neglect our earthly sovereign by active interest in the realms she rules. And if we believe that Christ's Church, though built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, has for the chief corner-stone Himself; if we see in her, not a self-formed collection of individuals who agree in following Him, but, as Scripture says, His Body,[1] instinct with His life; if for her He shed His most precious Blood that He might present her glorious and immaculate[2] in the realms of purity;—then in making much of her, we surely are doing no wrong to Him. Only because, notwithstanding the scars and stains which come of her sojourn here below, she is yet so intimately His, should she be so precious to His servants;—drawing the noblest souls into the highest paths of service; bidding them forget their mother's grey hairs while they espouse her undying youth and beauty.

[1] Eph. v. 22, 23.

[2] Eph. v. 27; and Acts xx. 28.

For many centuries Isaiah's words contributed to shape that rule of the Western Church which, taking it for granted that perfect devotion to a heavenly interest must exclude all earthly wedlock, imposed on candidates for Holy Orders the condition of celibacy. But whether we look to primitive precedents or to the lessons of experience, we may not doubt that the Church of England was well advised when, in the sixteenth century, she removed this restriction. If among the first Christians the ordained did not marry, it is at least certain that the married were not seldom ordained; devotion to an earthly spouse was thus held to be compatible with devotion to the Bride of Christ. And experience has shown that to impose a rule of celibacy upon some thousands of men, without taking note of individual temperament or vocation, is to put a strain even upon consecrated human nature which it will not always bear, and which may lead too easily to grave disaster.

But granting, or rather earnestly maintaining this, may we not wish that the freedom of choice in this matter which is happily allowed to the clergy of the Church of England were more often exercised than it is in favour of a single life? If a single life involves the surrender of the sympathy and strength which a good wife can contribute to her husband's work, it also means freedom from the contingency of a wife who will not contribute them: and it may mean more freedom of action in obedience to the dictates of conscience; it may mean more independence of the world's opposition,—since many a man who cares nothing for what touches only himself, cannot withstand the cruel shafts that may be directed against his wife's happiness or comfort;—it may mean more time, health, money, to be devoted to public religious objects. We have heard much lately of the hardships which the clergy have had to endure in many parts of the country, in consequence of

the operation of causes wholly beyond their control: but these hardships have been undoubtedly increased by the fact that clergymen are generally married men with families to support and educate. What would the author of the 7th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, with his Apostolic prescription for the "present distress" addressed to all Christians, have prescribed to Christian ministers in such circumstances as ours?[1] What may not be—I will not say advisable, but necessary—if it should be ordered in the counsels of God's Providence, that the English Church should one day have to address herself to a more exacting work for the English people than ever before, but without any of those material endowments which the piety of past ages has bequeathed to her?

II.

The devotion which Isaiah predicts will be not only complete, but disinterested. The true-hearted bridegroom marries, not that he may win rank or wealth, or public recognition, or any outward advantages whatever: he weds his bride for her own sake, because she is what she is, because in wedding her he finds the joy and satisfaction of his heart. It is "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health." So was it also to be with the espousals of the soul. The Holy Bride is wooed for her own sake, and not for anything that she may bestow on those who would win her.

And St. Simon's life points our attention especially to one department of this loyal indifference to personal success or advantage, by the obscurity which, as has been noticed, so remarkably distinguishes his apostolate. As combining this personal obscurity with the loftiest and most ennobling work that could be intrusted to the hands

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 26-34.

of man, Simon the Canaanite is a forerunner of the vast majority of the ministers of Christ in every generation. From the necessity of the case, only a small minority can attain to leadership or distinction : in every army, whether it wear the uniform of an earthly monarch or of the King of kings, all but a handful must be privates. And St. Simon may remind us that in the army of Jesus Christ this is not at all necessarily a misfortune; that the *vita umbratilis* has consolations and advantages that are all its own.

Many of us know something of the devoted country clergyman who lives among and for the farmers and labourers who form his flock. He is often a man of culture and ability, and, what is more, of spiritual power; but the little group of peasants around him commands his best thoughts, his warmest affections, his most earnest prayers. And as from time to time some echo of the great world outside reaches him through the press or otherwise in his rural home, he hears how this or that friend at whose side he sat in lecture some ten or twenty years ago has won high fame and place in literature, or politics, or law, or among the ministers of the Church, and he is tempted, for a passing moment, to think regretfully of his own lot in life, even though he guards his heart against that miserable vice of envy, than which none more surely eats out moral force and beauty at the core of the soul. But there are considerations which should be weighed by any here who are looking forward to such a life as his, or to any other form of honest but unrecognised labour.

Every age has its characteristics; and a leading characteristic of ours is the increasing publicity of life, and the prevalent idea that publicity is somehow a certificate of excellence. Many causes contribute to this. Our modern facilities for travelling to all quarters of the globe with a

speed and certainty undreamt of one short century ago; our daily, hourly communications with distant continents through the agency of that electric fire which we are even now learning to make more perfectly the servant of our thoughts and wants; the modern art of so handling light as to render the face of every public man, or of every man who aspires to publicity, as familiar to us all as that of a near relative; above all, the Press, that fourth estate, which has already had, and will have increasingly, so many and such lasting effects upon the thoughts and lives of civilised men,—these all make for the spread and rule of publicity.

Never before in human history did human beings know so much of their contemporaries as they do now. Never before was notoriety placed so largely at the disposal of so many members of all classes in society, both for good and evil. For good assuredly, since to be known is to many a man a safeguard in moments of temptation or in partially instructed phases of conscience. But also not less certainly for evil, on account of the exaggerated prominence which is thus given to the approbation of our fellow-creatures, as a governing motive—a motive which to say the least cannot always be depended on to guide us aright. To many a man in our day, who never would have known the temptation two generations ago, the desire of acting or speaking or keeping silence with a view to shaping a paragraph in a newspaper is a motive of almost resistless force. It is widely assumed that notoriety must accompany excellence; that where notoriety is missed or shunned there is either nothing admirable to show, or something wrong that fears the light of day; and that saintly or fruitful lives, altogether removed from the public eye, can scarcely be treated as having real existence.

And yet in the Holy Gospel, publicity—at least on

this earthly scene—is by no means appraised after the manner just described. The general drift of our Lord's teaching is to lead us to regard a widespread reputation with distrust. In His day the classes which enjoyed the highest character for excellence were most bitterly opposed to Him. Nothing in the Pharisees and Scribes is more strongly condemned than their various resources for establishing and maintaining a reputation; their prayers in the streets; their high places in the synagogues; their works done for to be seen of men; their broad phylacteries. Of all who pray or fast, or give alms with this object, our Lord says that they have their reward—*ἀπέχουσι*.[1] They have it and take it away with them. They have in the approval of men a full equivalent for the sacrifices which they make; they cannot complain if there is nothing awaiting them beyond it. And, on the other hand, He says to His disciples, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets."[2] He insists again and again on the difference between appearance and reality, between the judgment of man and the judgment of God. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."[3] "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known."[4] "Many shall say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you."[5]

My brethren, even for the work of this world there can be no question as to the value of some measure of withdrawal from the public eye—whether for preparation or refreshment. And to be thrust into a position of pro-

[1] St. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16. [2] St. Luke vi. 26.
[3] St. Matt. xix. 30. [4] St. Matt. x. 26. [5] St. Matt. vii. 22.

minence without some preparatory seclusion is almost certainly to encounter discredit and ruin. Those who have risen high in the service of the State tell us that for such work as theirs, the drudgery of a public office, or the affairs of an exacting constituency, or some literary enterprise undertaken not as a recreation, but as a serious business, must precede appearance on a more public field: it is in these humbler districts of activity that the knowledge is gained and the faculties are disciplined, and the judgment brought to that measure of insight and sobriety which enables a man to handle great affairs without serious miscarriage.

A kindred law obtains in the spiritual world. Our Lord's forerunner was "in the deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel."[1] Nay, our Lord Himself, that He might teach us the value of a hidden life, spent thirty years in the carpenter's shop and on the hillsides of Nazareth; as a villager among His fellows, as a tradesman under working orders; unknown, unthought of, save by His Mother and His foster-father, until He began His public and ministerial life.

And so with His disciples and servants it has constantly happened that life has been in the main a long silent preparation for some one act or form of service in which, like the flower which blooms and dies, it has attained its predestined perfection. What can be more splendid, morally and religiously speaking, than such an end as that of the monk Telemachus,[2] whose generous heroism shamed professedly Christian Rome out of those gladiatorial shows, which in his day still lingered on as an heirloom of the brutal spirit of Paganism? Depend upon it, the preceding years of prayer and self-discipline enabled this brave servant of Christ to take no account at that

[1] St. Luke i. 80.

[2] Theodoret v. 26; Gibbon, Decl. and Fall, c. 30, iv. 41, ed. Milman.

critical moment of personal safety or of bodily pain, and by rushing into the amphitheatre to welcome a cruel death, which was a step in the education of the conscience of the Christianized Empire.

Or take the career of a great Divine, of one of the greatest, if a stranger may be permitted the opinion, that Cambridge has ever produced—Lancelot Andrewes. Andrewes combined with the polemical learning of the sixteenth century the fuller and more positive knowledge of the seventeenth; he not merely knew what the Primitive Church was not, but also what she was; and thus he reached a maturity and balance of theological judgment that had, perhaps, been impossible during the struggle and shock of the Reformation. The quaint and formal methods of exposition which belong to his age cannot disguise the massive thought and learning of his sermons; his strength and acuteness as a controversialist was felt by the accomplished theologians who were at that day in the service of the Church of Rome; while as a teacher and leader of souls in the highest paths of private devotion, training them to follow the thoughts and to feel at home with the words of the ancient Church, Andrewes still stands alone. His epitaph in St. Saviour's, Southwark, hardly belongs to the class of sepulchral exaggerations:—"Linguarum, artium, scientiarum, humanorum divinorum omnium infinitus thesaurus . . . ; orthodoxæ Christi ecclesiæ dictis, scriptis, precibus, exemplo, incomparabile propugnaculum."

Read Andrewes' life, and you will be struck with the quiet undemonstrative character of his early manhood, when as a Cambridge undergraduate he used to walk on foot to his home in London, once in the year, and during these walks to "observe the grass, herbs, corn, trees, cattle, earth, water, heavens, any of the creatures, and to contemplate their natures, orders, qualities, virtues, uses," since "this was to him the greatest mirth, contentment,

and recreation that could be."[1] While still only a lecturer at Pembroke College, he composed his *Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine*; as Vicar of St. Giles', Cripplegate, he compiled his *Private Devotions*. The leading features of his character and attainments were developed before he reached those higher posts to which he added new and lasting distinction; they had grown during the retired life of the student, who thought of nothing beyond the duty of the hour and of doing his best to discharge it.

And speaking in this church to-day, it is impossible not to recall another great career, in which long years of silent labour have at last led to a position of authority rare indeed in any generation. Not merely the authority of high ecclesiastical office; but the authority of learning, the range and accuracy of which commands the respect of Europe; and the authority of a personal character, which by its simplicity, its strength, its generosity, and its tenderness, wins at the hands of those who have had the happiness of contact with it, I know not whether more of reverence or of affection. His name need not be mentioned in his own University;[2] in this his hour of sickness he will not fail to have the prayers of the many who must owe him much that in no other manner they can possibly hope to repay.

In these instances, it may be urged, the day came at last when merit worked no longer in the shade; but what is to be said of lives which, like St. Simon's, are obscure, more or less, to the very end? Well, this is to be said of them, that the obscurity does not last for ever; it will not last beyond the Day when all things shall be revealed. And meanwhile our business is not to win a name, but to do a work. Much of the best work that has ever been done, has been done by men whose names were never

[1] *Life*, by Isaacson, p. vi; *Works*, ed. Oxf. Parker, 1854.

[2] The reference is to Bishop Lightfoot of Durham. He died Dec. 21, 1889.

heard of, or heard of only accidentally after their death. Think of that unnamed tutor of Roger Bacon, who, when Paris was intently weighing the claims of rival schoolmen, introduced the young Franciscan to a study into which metals, minerals, roots, tools, instruments, manuscripts Hebrew and Arabic, the apparatus of budding experiment and inquiry, the germs of modern research and learning, were crowded in a rude profusion. Think of the long unknown authors of books that have touched the heart of the world, as the *Imitation of Christ*, or the *Spiritual Combat*, or the *Whole Duty of Man*, or the *Eikon Basilike*. Think of those Hebrew prophets who have no place in the Canon, whose names are unknown, or only guessed at, but who in their day uttered words of decisive import for Israel. Think of the humble missionaries who at the bidding and under the leadership of a Boniface, of an Augustine, of a Cyril or Methodius, of a Selwyn, of a Patteson, of an Innocent of Moscow, have helped these spiritual chiefs to win families, tribes, nations of men, for Jesus Christ; themselves unremembered even by name here below. The Son of Sirach draws a vivid picture of the dignity and the value of unrecognised labourers. "Without them," he says, "cannot a city be inhabited; and they shall not dwell where they will; nor go up and down. They shall not be sought for in public council, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; they cannot declare justice and judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of their craft." [1]

III.

And the prophet's comparison suggests a devotion that

[1] Ecclus. xxxviii. 31-34.

will last till death. "Till death us do part." In our day men, and even women, are sometimes ready to raise the question whether the sacred obligation of the marriage tie is not to be pronounced a failure, and might not be replaced by something which ought to be described in very plain and stern terms. To raise such questions at all is to forget the fundamental conditions of moral, social, and national wellbeing. As well might a sensible man propose to discuss the truth and worth of mathematical axioms, as a good man to question a thesis so essential to practical morality as is the obligatoriness of the marriage bond. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Not less indissoluble is the tie which binds the conscience of Christ's ministers to their sacred service. The need for that service can never cease; the Divine Master Who continuously expects it cannot change or die; the Cause which won its first fresh enthusiasms is and will be what it has ever been until the Lord comes. It may be lawful to retire from the ranks of an earthly army; but to forget the indelible character which consecration to ministerial work imprints upon the soul; to seek relief from so-called clerical disabilities after years of service; this is indeed, in the language of our Master, "to look back after putting the hand to the plough." Weariness, impaired health, diminished opportunities for usefulness may come with years; but the tie of sacred service to the Cause and Church of Christ can only end with life.

It may be thought that this form of enthusiasm belongs to a day when the Old Testament had not yet been largely resolved by criticism into late forgeries or doubtful legends, and when the heroes of popular novels had not yet cast off the dust of their feet against the creed of Christendom. No, my brethren, these features of our time do not really affect the religious situation. Wait a little, and

you will see that, as after inquiry, to which Cambridge has contributed more than her share, the New Testament has survived Strauss and Baur and Schwegler, so the Old will not finally go to pieces at the bidding of Kuenen and Wellhausen. All that negative criticism can do is to modify some incidental features of our traditional way of looking at Scripture: the main fabric remains intact. And as to the Christian Deism that is to supplant Christianity, if it only will think long and steadily enough, it will surely discover that no difficulties in the Creed which it rejects are so great as those of faith in a Being Who is still held to be All-good as well as All-knowing and All-mighty, but Who yet, surveying this scene of moral misery and pain, has, on the hypothesis, left it to itself. . . . These clouds which are passing over the spiritual heavens are indeed no real reason why a man should fail in devotion to the Cause and Church of Christ.

How much might not be done for that dear and sacred cause, even by two or three undistinguished but resolute Christians! When Tacitus is describing the military revolt which raised Otho, for a brief interval, to the throne of the Roman world, he tersely remarks that two private soldiers undertook that the Imperial Power should be transferred to other hands, and they did transfer it. "Susceperе duo manipulares Imperium populi Romani transferendum: et transtulerunt."[1] The vigour of Grace is not less equal to great efforts than are the energies of nature: and there are nobler works to be achieved in our brief life than the promotion of any change whatever in the tenure of earthly power. We need not go far back into Church History—we have only to refer to the religious records of our own century—its successive efforts in recovering a hold first on one and then on another religious truth; in extending and deepening the study of Biblical

[1] Tac. Hist. i. 25.

and Patristic Literature; in improving the condition of the labouring classes; in giving a new impulse and range to Christian Missions—to see how much has in each case depended on some single will, enlightened and strengthened by the Grace of God. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,"[1] was an Apostle's confident exclamation; and the Source of that confidence is still where and what He was when it thus found expression.

Hard it is for those who know that their earthly career must be near its close to express to you, my younger friends, who are just entering upon life, their wondering, sympathetic, I had almost added their envious sense of your great and not yet wasted opportunities. As life draws near its end, we older men, standing in a clearer light, must more and more anticipate the verdict of the Supreme and Unerring Judge; must see and feel how much has been left undone which we ought to have done, and how much has been done which we ought not to have done; how the years that have past are too often records, at best, of mistakes of judgment or of mistakes of temper. For us the greater part of life is fixed and irreversible; for you it is still to be disposed of. How can you do better than resolve, by God's grace, that you will not let yourselves drift aimlessly through the springtide of life; nor fritter away your finite stock of energy on the trifles that may successively ask a share in it; that, God helping you, you will give what you have to give of thought, resolve, strength, affection to the Cause of Him Who made you, and Who died for you, and in Whose loyal service there are, even here, joys and consolations, that are not even suspected by those who have not embraced it?

[1] Phil. iv. 13.

SERMON XVI.

RELIGION AND ARMS.[1]

2 Timothy ii. 3.

A good soldier of Jesus Christ.

THE metaphor which the Apostle here chooses to describe the work of a primitive Christian Bishop, cannot but strike us as remarkable. He is writing to Timothy, whom he had appointed to take charge of the Church in Ephesus: and Timothy had a work to do which was in many respects hard and discouraging, while he would appear to have been by nature a man of somewhat soft and easy disposition, disposed rather to shrink from difficulty and danger than to look it in the face, and thus standing in some need of a bracing word of advice and warning such as the Apostle here addresses to him: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

But that the Apostle should put what he has to say into this precise form is not what we might have anticipated. Himself a servant of the Prince of Peace, and writing to another servant of the Prince of Peace, he might, we may think, have gone somewhere else for his metaphor than to the profession of arms. Was not the Gospel heralded from heaven as peace on earth among men in whom God is well pleased? Did not prophecy speak of Christ's coming as a time when men should beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into

[1] Preached (before the Officers and Men of the London Rifle Brigade) in St. Paul's Cathedral, on Low Sunday, April 28, 1889.

pruning-hooks; a time when nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should they learn war any more?[1] And, however imperfectly this ideal might have been realised in later days, could there be any doubt that the general spirit and drift of Christianity is opposed to war? War, for example, is represented by St. James as the outcome and expression of insurgent and selfish desire. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."[2] This is a picture of the principle of aggressive war; and a Christian's business is, by way of contrast, to study the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.[3]

I.

How, then, are we to explain this honour which the Apostle puts upon the military profession, when he points to a soldier as embodying, at any rate, some of the qualities which he desires to see in a Ruler of the Church of God?

We cannot say, by way of reply, that the metaphor is so accidental or singular that stress ought not, in fairness, to be laid on it. For there is a great deal more religious language with a military colouring or flavour about it—not merely in the Old Testament but in the New. "Fight the good fight of faith," writes St. Paul to Timothy, "lay hold on eternal life."[4] "Quit you like men," he bids the Corinthians; "quit you like men, be strong."[5] "Your adversary the devil," exclaims St. Peter, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith."[6] "So fight I," writes

[1] Isa. ii. 4. [2] St. James iv. 1, 2. [3] Rom. xiv. 19.
[4] 1 Tim. vi. 12. [5] 1 Cor. xvi. 13. [6] 1 St. Pet. v. 8, 9.

St. Paul to the Corinthians, "not as one that beateth the air;"[1] in other words, "Every blow that I aim at my spiritual adversary tells." Or, to omit other illustrations, what can be more suggestive than that well-known passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in which the Apostle, chained as he is while writing to a Roman soldier, connects each portion of his warder's dress and accoutrements with some one of those graces with which a Christian must encounter the powers of evil? "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness: and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."[2] Thus the girdle, the breastplate, the military sandals, the shield, the helmet, the sword of the Roman legionary, suggest—each of them—to the Apostle a separate Christian grace. He thinks of the Christian as engaged in a warfare no less real than that of the soldier; no less real, although it is a spiritual combat, and waged against invisible adversaries.

And, indeed, the high distinction assigned to soldiers in the Gospels prepares us for this language of the Epistles. We may not, indeed, forget such plain sayings of our Lord as, "If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight; . . . but now is My kingdom not from hence;"[3] or His healing the ear of Malchus,

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 26. [2] Eph. vi. 12-17. [3] St. John xviii. 36.

with the warning, "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."[1] But there is no mistaking the honour put upon the two heathen soldiers who confessed Him—the one at Capernaum, as the Lord of nature, the other on Calvary, as the Son of God.

The centurion who was stationed, with a small company of men under his command, at Capernaum, was not apparently a convert to Judaism; although, undoubtedly, his intimacy with the Jewish elders and his generosity in building a synagogue imply a strong attraction to God's earlier Revelation. By what steps he had come to think that our Lord could heal his paralysed servant we do not know; but there can be no question as to the thoroughness with which, notwithstanding his pagan antecedents, he owned Jesus Christ as Lord and the Lord of nature. When our Lord offered to visit this centurion's house, in order to work the cure, the officer deprecated it on two grounds: he was not worthy of the honour, and the effort was not necessary. "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."[2] If, as an officer, he could command the obedience of his men, Jesus could, no less surely, command that of the powers of nature; and when he had expressed this in a soldier's simple language, which we shall have to notice again presently, he was rewarded by the magnificent eulogy which our Lord addressed to those who followed Him, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."[3]

More signal was the confession of that other centurion, who was in command of the soldiers on Mount Calvary, and of whom we are reminded by the sculpture which now adorns the choir of this Cathedral. Of his antecedents, too, we know nothing: we know nothing of any preparatory struggles towards the light which he may

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 52. [2] Ibid. viii. 8. [3] Ibid. 10.

have made before or at the time. But this we do know, that it was not one of the children of Abraham, not one of the religious leaders of Israel; it was not priest, or prophet, or Pharisee, or Scribe, who made the great confession of faith in presence of the Crucified. "Truly this was the Son of God"[1] was the utterance of a rude warrior, whose days had been passed among his heathen comrades in their barrack at the castle of Antonia, amidst drill, and military games, and long, intricate disputes with the quarrelsome Jews who lived hard by in Bezetha, or in the valley between the Temple and Mount Zion, and in much else, it may be, which would have been inevitable in a pagan soldier's life. What an unanticipated, what a signal honour, that such an one, standing at the foot of the Cross, should first repeat the truth which is the very heart of the Creed of Christendom, —that He Who died in shame and pain at the hands of sinners, and for their redemption, is Himself none other than the Son of the Highest!

II.

The relation between the military profession and religion, thus traceable in Scripture, reappears in the history of the Church. If, in her higher moments, the Church has done her best to check or to condemn bloodshed, as when St. Ambrose excommunicated the Roman Emperor Theodosius, at the height of his power, for the slaughter at Thessalonica, she has distinguished between the immediate instruments of bloodshed and the monarchs or governments who were really responsible for it. If, in the first centuries of the faith, Christians were often unwilling to serve in the Roman army, and in some cases

[1] St. Matt. xxvii. 54.

preferred martyrdom to doing so, the reason was that such service was then so closely bound up with pagan usages, that to be an obedient soldier was to be a renegade from the Christian faith.[1] When this difficulty no longer presented itself, Christians were ready, like other citizens, to "wear weapons and serve in the wars." So long as warfare is defensive, or devoted not to the aggrandisement of empire, but to maintaining the peace and good order of the world, the Christian Church, while deploring its horrors, cannot but recognise in it at times a terrible necessity. When St. Leo of Rome or Charles Martel set their faces against the destructive inroads of Barbarism, they had behind them all that was best and purest in Christendom; and the rise of the military orders—the Knights of the Temple and of St. John of Jerusalem—marks a yet closer intimacy, the form of which was determined, no doubt, by the ideas of the twelfth century, rather than of our own, between a soldier's career and the profession of religion. We cannot pass that noble home of the law, the Temple, without remembering that it was once tenanted by an order of soldiers, bound by religious obligations, and devoted to the rescue and care of those sacred spots which must always be dear to the heart of Christendom. Until the closing years of the last century it was almost universally assumed that the dreadful charges had really been established on the strength of which the Templars were put to death and their estates were forfeited; and that the suppression of the order, if disfigured by needless cruelty, was substantially an act of justice. Even so late a writer as Dean Milman, although strongly inclining to do so, hesitates altogether to acquit the Templars;[2] but more recent investigations, especially in

[1] Compare Tertullian, *De coronâ militis*, 11, and *De idololatriâ*, 19; although he is not always of this opinion, *Apol.* 37, 42.

[2] *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. v. p. 357.

Germany, leave no doubt of their innocence.[1] The order in whose establishment St. Bernard took such pleasure,[2] and whose rules he so largely framed, was a real, and, on the whole, a noble endeavour to combine in one the Christian and the soldier; and perhaps, in the whole history of Christendom, there is no more tragical crime than that by which, in order to gratify the avarice of an unscrupulous king, aided by the authority of a weak and interested pope, the order was abolished.

In our own day we are familiar with purely missionary organisations, both within and without the Church, which take the name of armies, and would invest the good which they attempt, or achieve, with such appeals to the imagination as are made by describing all their proceedings in military language. This is not the place or the time to discuss their work; but the form which it takes is another and a very recent illustration of the relation which Christians have always felt to exist between the career of a soldier and the life and work of a Christian.

III.

Here, then, let us ask ourselves the question, What are the qualities which are common to a good soldier and a good Christian? The answer will explain and justify the language of the Apostle.

1. The first is that each—the Christian and the soldier—does his work well in the exact degree of his devotion to his commander. The greatest generals have been distinguished by the power of inspiring an unbounded confidence in and attachment to themselves: this is true in different senses, of Alexander, of Hannibal, of Cæsar, of

[1] Cf. *Der Untergang des Templer-Ordens mit urkundlichen und kritischen Beiträgen von Dr Konrad Schottmüller.* Berlin. 1887.

[2] See his famous *Sermo ad Milites Templi.*

Napoleon. Of Hannibal and Napoleon it is especially true: it compensated to the former for his great inferiority in numbers during the long struggle which he carried on, unsupported, against the power of Rome: it was not forfeited by the latter, even when his reckless expenditure of life in his military operations was almost unparalleled. The strength of a general is the attachment of his men; the strength of an army, attachment to their general. Where this exists there is no waste of time and thought in discontented criticism, no hesitation between the receipt of an order and obeying it; nay, even if the commander be mistaken, the confidence which he inspires will often go far, by the enthusiasm which it creates, to cancel the effect of his error. To have unbounded confidence in his leader—to be willing to follow him anywhere at any moment—is practically the first virtue of a soldier.

And is it otherwise with a Christian? What is the deepest secret of the Christian life if it be not an unbounded confidence in the Captain of our salvation,[1] Jesus Christ our Lord? Devotion to His Person, undoubting belief in His Word, readiness to do and to endure whatever He may order—this is to be a practical Christian. One of the earliest professions of this loyalty, by one who, perhaps, had not weighed the full meaning of his words, but who yet expressed the true Christian temper, is, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest."[2] The Commander-in-Chief of Christians deserves this whole-hearted devotion. For He, our Captain, Himself has grappled with the enemy: He has overcome the world:[3] He has spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly:[4] He has, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the

[1] Heb. ii. 10.
[2] St. Matt. viii. 19.
[3] St. John xvi. 33.
[4] Col. ii. 15.

devil, and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.[1] For those who believe in Him, it is an obvious duty to trust and follow a Leader Who has Himself borne the brunt of the conflict, and Who, while He gives His orders, extends His generous care and help to the last and weakest straggler in His vast host. Certainly a Christian is a good soldier in the degree in which he is thus mindful of the distinction and of the obligations which attach to wearing the uniform of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The second virtue in a soldier is courage. In the conventional language of the world, a soldier is "gallant,' just as a lawyer is "learned," and a clergyman is "reverend:" whatever be a man's real character, the title belongs to him by right of his profession. There are virtues in which a soldier may be wanting without damage to his military reputation. But courage is not one of them. Not to be at his post in the hour of danger, for any reason short of a distinct call of duty, or sheer bodily weakness, has ever meant for a soldier professional ruin: the one matter which must be above suspicion is his character as a brave man. No doubt courage, as a soldier possesses or requires it, is often largely a physical excellence; presupposing a certain nervous organisation in the body, as well as the tenacity and unyieldingness of the will, in face of danger. But, in its higher forms, it is much more than physical, since it involves a complete subjection and sacrifice of the physical instinct of self-preservation to a felt present moral necessity for effort or resistance; and this sublimer aspect of the quality it is which men have honoured as something altogether distinct from the courage of an animal; as a virtue which asserts in man's complex nature the decided superiority of the soul or character. From Thermopylæ to Balaclava, history presents us

[1] Heb. ii. 14, 15.

with not a few examples of this high excellence, which almost make us forget the dreadful character of war itself in the spectacle of the moral elevation whereof those who take part in it may sometimes be capable.

Now, courage is scarcely, if at all, less necessary to a good Christian than to a good soldier. Certainly the Christian needs and employs a distinct variety—so to put it—of the virtue. The courage which he mostly needs is moral rather than physical; passive rather than active. But it is not therefore less really courage. He cannot, indeed, without disloyalty to the law of Christ, return evil for evil, or blow for blow; he must let the man who has taken his cloak take his coat also, and turn the other cheek to the assailant who has smitten the one.[1] This may at first sight appear to belong to a moral ideal which has nothing to do with courage; which is, in fact, very poor-spirited. But side by side with the precepts to give way where selfish interests only are at stake are the precepts to resist unflinchingly where principle is concerned, —where anything is in question that touches God's truth or honour. It was observed with surprise in the early days of Christianity that the same men whose meek, unresisting bearing provoked the jests and taunts of their pagan critics, were absolutely fearless when they were summoned to choose between offering a little incense to the statue of the Cæsar, or dying by a death of torture. And, indeed, moral courage does not go always hand in hand with physical courage. You may meet with men who would, without a second thought, lead a storming party to the breach, but who quail before the polished ridicule of a club or a drawing-room, even when they have no doubt whatever of the truth or excellence of that which provoked it, and no particular respect for the persons from whom it comes. Courage is, at least, as much needed by

[1] St. Matt. v. 39, 40.

the soldier of Jesus Christ as by the soldier of the Queen, if he would vanquish first of all himself and his own passions; and then, in his Master's Name, the world around him.

What is the secret spring of this courage? Not, in the long-run, natural doggedness or pluck; but reliance on a Higher and protecting Power. It was an ancient warrior who exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord my Strength, Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight; my Hope and my Fortress, my Castle, and my Deliverer, my Defender in Whom I trust, Who subdueth my people that is under me."[1] "Though an host of men were laid against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid; and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him."[2]

And if God is the secret of physical, much more is He of moral courage. Moral courage is based on these words of our Lord, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear Him Who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."[3] It is based, too, on the certainty of God's present help. "Thou therefore, my son," writes St. Paul to Timothy, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."[4] "I can do all things," he assures the Philippians, "through Christ Which strengtheneth me."[5] And of these Philippians he desires to hear that, "with one mind," they are "striving together for the Faith of the Gospel; and," he adds, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them a manifest token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."[6] Have we not all received this equipment of Divine assistance when we were devoted to Christ in Baptism? Let us ponder the familiar words, "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do

[1] Ps. cxliv. 1, 2. [2] Ps. xxvii. 3. [3] St. Luke xii. 4, 5.
[4] 2 Tim. ii. 1. [5] Phil. iv. 13. [6] Phil. i. 27, 28.

sign him with the sign of the Cross,"—why?—"in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."[1] If the Christian life means anything, it means a life of courage.

3. A third excellence in a soldier is the sense of discipline. Without discipline an army becomes an unmanageable horde, one part of which is as likely as not to turn its destructive energies against another. And nothing strikes the eye of a spectator, as he watches a regiment making its way through one of the great thoroughfares of London, more than the contrast presented by the unvarying, I had almost said the majestic, regularity of its onward movement, and the bewildering varieties of pace, gesture, direction, costume, of the motley crowd of curious civilians who flit sporadically around it. Discipline in an army is not merely the perfection of form, it is a condition of power. Numbers and resources cannot atone for its absence; but it may easily make numbers and other resources powerless. We Englishmen naturally think of the squares at Waterloo; but the lesson is written in large characters in all history.

What discipline meant for that great people whose arms enabled it to impose its laws and language on the ancient world, and to whose work we moderns, whether we know it or not, are in so many ways so largely indebted, we learn from the words of the centurion at Capernaum, whom we have already had before us. When the centurion would profess his faith in our Lord's power over the forces of nature, he naturally bethinks him of the discipline of the Roman legion, with which, from his earliest

[1] Public Baptism of Infants.

manhood, he had been familiar. Before his soldier's mind there rises the picture of the legion, with its six tribunes—"chief captains" they are called in our version—commanding it by turns; its subdivision into ten cohorts, each of which was in turn subdivided into three maniples, while these again each contained two centuries; bodies which should have consisted of a hundred men, but which practically sometimes nearly sank to fifty. He himself was in command of one of these centuries there in Capernaum; and his thoughts travelled to the cohort which was always stationed at Jerusalem, and then to the headquarters of the Roman army of occupation at Cæsarea. He knew how perfect was the order which still prevailed in the forces that had subdued the world. "I," he exclaimed, "am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."[1] Himself under superior officers, he knew what it was to obey. Having soldiers under him, he knew how his commands were obeyed. He could not doubt, in view of his own experience, that the powers of nature, which were under the orders of Jesus Christ, would obey *His* word. His habit of mind, accustomed by turns to obedience and to command, and capable of command because accustomed to obey, was already, as Tertullian said of the human soul, naturally Christian.

For discipline is not less a Christian than a military virtue. St. Paul thinks of faith itself as obedience; his great phrase, "the obedience of faith,"[2] illuminates his idea of its real character. And the Epistles abound in warnings against any who "walk disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us."[3] Christians are warned, "Obey them that have the rule

[1] St. Matt. viii. 9. [2] Rom. i. 5; xvi. 26. [3] 2 Thess. iii. 6.

over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account."[1] And the precept is very comprehensive which rules that all things be done "decently and in order."[2]

There is, of course, this difference between the discipline of the Church of Christ and that of the army—that the former requires a personal and moral, not less than an outward compliance with its prescriptions. When indefensible claims have been put forward by Church authority, or flagrant evils have displayed themselves in the Church's practical system, a revolt of the Christian conscience takes place which, for the time being, is fatal to discipline. So it was at the Reformation, which involved the rejection of an usurped authority. So, to a certain extent, it is now, when our final courts of appeal in cases of doctrine and discipline cannot, as at present organised, be defended on the lines of Christian principle. But, further, it must be owned that the temper of modern Christians of itself very frequently makes discipline more difficult than has been the case in former days. The sense of personal responsibility, which is so valuable an ingredient in true religious life, has been exaggerated into forms of religious self-assertion on the part of individual men and groups of men; and this self-assertion becomes inconsistent with what St. Paul calls "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[3] The common Church is shattered into a thousand sects; the common faith of Christendom tends more and more to be resolved into a multitude of separate views, as numerous as are the several minds which apprehend it. Even within our own portion of the Church, we must admit that we are very far from obeying the Apostolic rule in the matter of discipline, and that in this matter we have needful lessons to learn from the army.

[1] Heb. xiii. 17. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 40. [3] Eph. iv. 3.

4. One more characteristic of the military spirit is the feeling of comradeship. All over the world a soldier recognises a brother in a soldier. Not only members of the same regiment, of the same corps, of the same army and country, but combatants in opposing armies are conscious of a bond which unites them, in spite of their antagonism; and the officers and men of hostile armies have been known to engage in warm expressions of mutual fellowship as soon as they were free to do so by the proclamation of peace. This generous and chivalrous feeling, which survives the clash of arms, confers on a soldier's bearing an elevation which we cannot mistake. When, in the later years of his life, Marshal Soult, who had been in command in the Peninsula, visited this country, he came to St. Paul's Cathedral; and the monument which most interested him, and which had been recently erected in yonder south transept, was that of Sir John Moore, the hero of Corunna. Soult—says one who witnessed it—stood for some time before the monument; he could not speak; he could hardly control himself; he was, in fact, in a flood of tears.

Certainly it was meant to be so in the Church. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one towards another."[1] And so it was in the Church in the main—though with some admitted and noticeable exceptions—in days when the heathen could exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another!" If it is not so now, at least, on such a scale and so generally as to witness for Christ and to impress the unbelieving world, let us each take shame to himself for his share, whatever it be, in so serious a failure. But this, at any rate, we know, that brotherly kindness is a more imperative rule in the Church than in the army; and that now, as heretofore, there are not a few Christians

[1] St. John xiii. 35.

who do their best to obey it. The violations of the law of love, as of all laws, have, from the nature of the case, a publicity which is denied to its wide and sincere observance.

IV.

These observations apply to all forms of military service; but the presence of our London Brigade in St. Paul's to-day makes one more observation natural on the subject of the Volunteer movement. There are more reasons than one why the Volunteer movement should be looked upon with interest by those who have at heart the interests of Religion. It not only adds greatly to the strength of the country, and so, indirectly, to whatever of religious effort is associated with the wellbeing and enterprise of England throughout the world: it strengthens the country without involving those drawbacks which, from a moral point of view, are more or less and inevitably associated with large standing armies. A Volunteer force, while capable of rendering invaluable service in the defence of our homes, cannot easily be employed, like the great armies of the Continent, for the furtherance of an aggressive or ambitious policy. And, moreover, the volunteer is a soldier who does not thereby cease to be a civilian; and, if this should be held to imply any professional inferiority—a point on which obviously I could not venture an opinion—it is not without decided moral advantages. The conscripts who made up the vast hosts which the first Napoleon poured across Europe, from Madrid to Moscow, were young men, taken from their homes almost in boyhood, and necessarily exposed to the mischiefs which the early removal of domestic influences surely involves. If these evils are now generally lessened by systems of shortened service, they cannot be held to be altogether done away with.

The volunteer soldier lives not in barracks, but at home; and he enjoys those great advantages which the effort and discipline of a soldier's life confers, without forfeiting the aids to purity and unselfishness which belong to the duties and restraints of home. This does not mean that he escapes that sacrifice of time, and it may be of health, which military service often exacts; and the widows and orphans of our volunteer forces have a claim upon the charitable assistance of the country, all the more emphatic in that the time and toil of their departed relatives have been unremunerated, excepting by a sense of duty.

Of this let us be sure—that the chief virtues of a soldier are also, in their substance, the virtues of a Christian. Loyalty to our chief, courage in the discharge of duty, obedience to discipline, and a brotherly feeling for all comrades,—these constitute common ground between the soldiers of the earthly and those of the heavenly army. At no time has the army of this country been wanting in men, of all ranks, who have afforded bright examples of whatever is courteous and gentle, as well as resolute and unyielding, in the Christian character. And, indeed, the good soldier, like the centurion Cornelius,[1] is always in a fair way, to say the least, to become a good Christian; while the good Christian, as such, cannot but cherish the virtues which are the excellence of the soldier. But there is an important difference between the services. The one ends, if not before, yet certainly at the moment of quitting this earthly scene; the last possible point of contact that even a Wellington can have with the profession of his choice is seen in the devices on his coffin, and the epitaph on his grave. The other service—that of Jesus Christ—although under changed conditions, lasts on into that world to which death is but an introduction, and which

[1] Acts x. 1-6.

our Great Captain has opened to us by His Death and His Resurrection from the dead. Let us recognise, in ourselves or in others, the high honour which must always attach to wearing the uniform of the Queen; but let us also endeavour, whether we wear it or not, to be or to become, each of us while he may, good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

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